

THE STATE BEFORE THE SELF
GRIEF, VIRTUE, AND *PAIDEIA* IN PLUTARCH'S *PARALLEL LIVES*

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(Classics)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

April 2022

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The state before the self: grief, virtue, and *paideia* in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*

submitted by Bronwyn Langley in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

in Classics

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ABSTRACT

Using the *Parallel Lives* of *Aemilius Paulus-Timoleon*, *Pericles-Fabius Maximus*, and *Phocion-Cato Minor* as case studies, this thesis examines Plutarch's use of grief episodes (*Aem.* 36.1; *Tim.* 5.2; *Per.* 36.4; *Fab.* 24.4; *Cato Min.* 11.1-2) to showcase the strength or fragility of a given statesman's virtue. In looking at Plutarch's treatment of these grief episodes, it becomes clear that he expects statesmen to display specific virtues, such as selflessness and self-control, to a greater extent than an average citizen. Therefore, statesmen must place the needs of their people over their own, even when grieving the loss of a loved one. Throughout the *Parallel Lives*, Plutarch emphasizes the need for Greek philosophical education, *paideia*, in order to strengthen one's virtue, and, thereby, become a more effective statesman. In professing the significance of virtues such as self-control, Plutarch supports the Platonic ideal of *metriopatheia*, which calls for the control of one's emotions. Conversely, he criticizes the Stoic ideal of *apatheia*, which calls for the absence of emotion, and herein makes a distinction between what kind of Greek *paideia* is best. Heroes such as Aemilius, Timoleon, Pericles, and Phocion, who have been properly educated, are better able to face adversity and remain consistent in their virtues. On the hand, the virtues of heroes such as Fabius Maximus and Cato Minor are shown to fade over time without the benefit of this education.

LAY SUMMARY

This thesis examines Plutarch's use of episodes wherein a hero grieves the loss of a loved one using three pairs of *Parallel Lives* as case studies: *Aemilius Paulus-Timoleon*, *Pericles-Fabius Maximus*, and *Phocion-Cato Minor*. Plutarch utilizes these episodes in order to evaluate the strength of a hero's virtue and character. Through his treatment of, and commentary on, these episodes, it becomes clear that Plutarch expects statesmen to be more selfless and to possess more self-control than an average citizen: statesmen must place the needs of their people over their own, even when grieving the loss of a loved one. Throughout the *Parallel Lives*, Plutarch emphasizes the need for Platonic philosophical education, *paideia*, in order to strengthen one's virtue, and, thereby, become a more effective statesman.

PREFACE

This study is the original, unpublished, and independent work of Bronwyn Langley. All Greek and Latin translations are taken from the Loeb Classical Library corpus, with minor modifications provided by me.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge all the support, advice, and encouragement I received from Professor Florence Yoon and Professor CW Marshall, who have been exceedingly patient and enthusiastic throughout this entire process. I would also like to thank my fellow students, Livia Graf and Yanxing Liu, who graciously dedicated their time and efforts to review my work, Silvia Zhu, for her moral support, Graham Braun and Lexie White, who guided me to this thesis topic, and the Department of Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies. Finally, I would like to thank my family members, Roy Langley, Carl-Heinz Langley, Denise Langley, and Carmen Rykaart, who diligently helped me make sense of my thoughts and who have provided me with invaluable moral support throughout the years.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Scholars such as Susan G. Jacobs, Philip Stadter, and A. E. Wardman have previously argued that, despite Plutarch's focus on public figures in this work, the moral lessons outlined in the *Lives* were relevant to both public and private figures.¹ While I agree that this premise is true if broadly applied to the purpose of this work as a whole, I argue that Plutarch positions certain lessons to apply more strictly to statesmen (i.e., public figures) alone.

The focus of this analysis is Plutarch's assessment of how to behave virtuously when grieving a φίλος (a loved one). Through an examination of three case studies, *Aemilius Paulus-Timoleon*, *Pericles-Fabius Maximus*, and *Phocion-Cato Minor*, I will demonstrate that Plutarch holds statesmen to different standards than he does private figures when it comes to what he considers virtuous behaviour in the face of grief. We will see that the standard virtues expected of a grieving private citizen are not necessarily the same virtues that are expected of, or acceptable for, a statesman. In short, professional engagement in public affairs alters how an individual is expected to behave.

Jacobs has previously suggested that the lessons outlined in Plutarch's *Lives* are also shaped by pragmatic values in addition to moral values.² I agree with this assessment, and propose that this pragmatic interest motivated Plutarch to establish a distinct standard for a statesman's virtue. For Plutarch, a statesman must place the needs of the state before his personal needs to be

¹ On the purpose of the *Lives* see Wardman 1974. Wardman suggests that Plutarch aims to teach men of all levels of politics how to be effective and virtuous in their duties (see also 105-132); Stadter 1989: xxxiv. Stadter posits that *Pericles*, specifically, was written in order to encourage the reader to be active in politics; Duff 2007: "Plutarch's explicit claims for the moral purpose of his *Parallel Lives*, made in the prologues to several pairs, are well known. At the start of the *Alexander—Caesar*, he declares that an understanding of the character of his subjects, conceived in terms of right or wrong behaviour, will be a determining factor in his choice of material: he will select for inclusion, he says, material in which there will be 'a revelation of virtue and vice' (*Alex.* 1). In other prologues, Plutarch makes explicit the purpose of such a focus on the moral character of the subject: understanding the character of the subject will lead to an *improvement* in the reader's own" (3); Jacobs 2017: 2.

² Jacobs 2017: 5.

an effective and virtuous leader. This standard of virtue governs what behaviour is expected of a statesman, even in personal matters such as the grieving of a φίλος. This indicates that political and personal virtue are not interchangeable in Plutarch's works. From here on, I use 'political virtue' to denote the virtues that Plutarch associates with those engaged in political activities, and 'personal virtue' to denote the virtues associated with apolitical members of society. The key political virtues Plutarch is concerned with here are selflessness and self-control. Whereas the standards for political virtue do not apply to a private individual, personal virtue is overridden entirely by political virtue for a statesman, and even their personal matters must be handled according to the standards of political virtue.

So how does Plutarch go about conveying his lessons on virtue? As a whole, as pairs, and even as individual works, the *Lives* show Plutarch's reliance on structural narrative techniques to strengthen and emphasize the key points that he wishes to convey to his reader.³ A comparative structure is utilized across all of these levels,⁴ and any attempt to understand the significance of repeated themes within the *Lives* must give due consideration to this framework.⁵ Plutarch uses this comparative technique when constructing the flow and form of grief episodes, and this guides his placement of these episodes within a narrative.⁶ Thus, the grief episodes of a pair of Greek and Roman heroes are often juxtaposed, so that the reader is prompted to compare how virtuous each statesman was in dealing with their loss. The placement of each episode varies between *Lives* since Plutarch makes use of a variety of comparative structures, but Plutarch consistently connects each

³ See Duff 2011: 213-215. Duff discusses the basic structure of the 'Plutarchan Book' and the progression of modern views regarding this structure and its rendering in modern publications. As a brief overview, the *Lives* were published as pairs in which one Greek *Life* would precede one Roman *Life*. There are a few exceptions to this structure, as in three pairs – *Coriolanus-Alkibiades*, *Aemilius Paulus-Timoleon*, and *Sertorius-Eumenes* – the manuscripts record the Roman *Life* preceding the Greek *Life*. There is also an exception with the *Agis-Cleomenes-Gracchi*, which contains four rather than two *Lives*, though the general setup remains the same.

⁴ Beck 2019: 313.

⁵ See Stadter 1997; Pelling 1995; Duff 1999; Pelling 2002.

⁶ On Plutarch's narrative structure and methodology, see Pelling 2004; Duff 2011; Mossman 2018.

grief episode to a larger point about virtue; as mentioned in the introduction, these episodes often comment specifically on the importance of virtues such as self-control. The placement of a grief episode and the accompanying assessment of that hero's virtue both serve to shape the reader's perception of the hero as an individual and to reflect their moral calibre as a whole.

Plutarch also uses grief episodes to convey key elements of a pair's overall, thematic moral message. Through these moralized moments of grief, Plutarch advocates for the Roman adoption of Platonic values, demonstrating to his reader that this specific form of Greek *paideia* is most practical, proper, and beneficial.⁷ Plutarch's focus on this culturally-specific understanding of virtue (i.e., *paideia*), has enjoyed much scholarly attention.⁸ However, the significance of grief as an indicator of cultural perceptions of virtue and morality has not yet been centred by scholars in such discussions. Ancient philosophical views on grief, in general, have only recently become a topic of scholarly investigation. In the last ten years, David Konstan has done notable and seminal research on the topic of grief in Greco-Roman culture.⁹ His research has highlighted the value of approaching the topic of Plutarchan *paideia* from a grief-centred angle since attitudes towards grief are culturally specific.¹⁰ That the works of many ancient Greek and Roman philosophers are concerned with the relationship between emotion, virtue, and morality further bolsters the value of this approach, since these works attest to a strong, pre-existing philosophical association

⁷ See Pelling 2002: 285-286. Regarding the connection between *paideia* and self-control, Pelling tells us: "Time and again we find Plutarch analysing heroes' self-control, and finding them lacking; and we find this particularly frequently in cases where Hellenic education is in point. Marcellus, for instance, had Hellenic tastes and did his best to indulge them in a warlike period, but he was eventually destroyed by his inability to control his natural bellicosity" (285). He also notes that "Some people did better: for instance Aemilius, again a man with educated and Hellenic tastes, or Brutus and the younger Cato, both followers of Greek philosophy; others worse, particularly those whose education was lacking – Marius, Coriolanus – or whose Hellenism was defective, like the elder Cato. This link of the pathē with education is unsurprising, given Plutarch's stress on education as the vital prerequisite for self-control" (286); see also Stadter 2014: 21.

⁸ See, for example, Pelling 2002; Duff 2008; Cairns 2014; Asirvatham 2019.

⁹ Konstan 2016a; Konstan 2016b; see also Kristjánsson 2018: 122.

¹⁰ See Konstan 2016b.

between these concepts. The approach which I have chosen is, therefore, inspired by both the findings of recent research on emotion in Greco-Roman culture, and the widespread ancient philosophical interest in grief that influenced both Plutarch's *Moralia* and the *Lives*.

Grief and Virtue: The Control of Πάθος

How we define and use ancient Greek terms in relation to modern ones when discussing grief and other emotions in a philosophical capacity requires careful consideration. Therefore, I will begin by examining the term πάθος, its relationship to grief, and its association with virtue, before defining grief more specifically. The ancient Greek word πάθος comes closest to describing what we broadly think of as 'emotion' in a modern, English sense.¹¹ However, in its original classical Greek context, this term encompassed several senses: the general experience of a person – often in a negative sense; a secondary quality of something's makeup (in a philosophical context); and, finally, a range of mental activity, such as recollection.¹² Specific terms for individual emotions are also attested in Greek texts, indicating an existing philosophical conceptualization of emotions such as fear (φόβος), anger (ὀργή), and love (φιλία), which existed as emotion-related terms within the larger category of πάθος.¹³

Having defined πάθος, let us examine the concept of grief more specifically. Aristotle's study of emotions in Book 2 of *Rhetorica* (1378a-1395b16) examines and defines a range of specific ancient Greek emotions but is somewhat unhelpful in this particular case, as it omits entries for emotions such as 'sadness' or 'loneliness'.¹⁴ While sadness and grief are not

¹¹ See Price 2009; Konstan 2016a: 4. *Pathos* may also be translated as 'passions'.

¹² Konstan 2016a: 3-4; 7, 12. Perceptions of emotion are not standard across cultures, but their experience is apparent cross-culturally. Aristotle, one of Plutarch's main philosophical influences, uses πάθος in the sense of 'a secondary quality of something's makeup' in *Metaphysica* 1022b15-21. He also employs πάθος in the sense 'remembering' in *De memoria et reminiscentia* 449b4-7; cf. 449b24-5.

¹³ It must be stressed that, as with πάθος, these individual terms for specific emotions should not be understood as perfectly equivalent to our own.

¹⁴ Konstan 2016a: 16.

synonymous, the former emotion is still of interest to the current analysis since ‘sadness’ and ‘grief’ are closely related states.¹⁵ Despite the absence of grief as an individual category in Aristotle’s catalogue of emotions, several terms for this concept do appear in extant Greek texts; examples include words such as λύπη and πένθος.¹⁶ It is therefore clear that the ancient Greeks did conceive of ‘grief’ as an emotion that belonged to the broader category of πάθος. I argue, as Konstan has done, that ‘grief’ was not often separated from πάθος because grief itself was envisioned as the experiencing of a collection of several strong emotions at once.¹⁷ With this in mind, I define grief as follows: the πάθος that results from the loss of a φίλος.

Use of the term πάθος in connection with the loss of a φίλος occurs throughout the *Lives*. For example, Plutarch describes Timoleon’s reaction to the death of his brother in precisely these terms: “But the grief of Timoleon over what had been done...” (τὸ δὲ Τιμολέοντος ἐπὶ τοῖς πεπραγμένοις πάθος, *Tim.* 7.1). Plutarch also makes use of the terms ἐμπαθής (‘passionate, much affected by something’) and λύπη (‘pain of mind, grief, distress’) within these contexts, in conjunction with other descriptive terminology to describe physical activities related to grief, such as κλαυθμός (‘weeping’): “In facing this misfortune, Cato seemed more passionate than philosophical, considering not only his weeping, his embracings of the dead, and the heaviness of his grief” (ἐμπαθέστερον ἔδοξεν ἢ φιλοσοφώτερον ἐνεγκεῖν τὴν συμφορὰν, οὐ μόνον κλαυθοῖς καὶ περιπτύξεσι τοῦ νεκροῦ καὶ βαρύτητι λύπης, *Cato Min.* 11.2). Thus, we can

¹⁵ For a modern analysis on how ‘sadness’ and ‘grief’ differ, see Huron 2018. Huron notes that while these two emotions result in similar mental states, they are precipitated by different factors (59).

¹⁶ Konstan 2016a: 244; Konstan 2016b: 17. λύπη is the most common term for grief and, although it encompasses the more general sense for ‘pain’ as well, Konstan argues that Aristotle’s use of this term in an emotional capacity is still distinct from ἄλγος, meaning pain in a more physical sense (a frequent term in Galen’s medical texts). The LSJ defines πένθος as ‘grief’ or ‘sorrow’, especially in the sense of grief for the dead.

¹⁷ Cf. Konstan 2016b: 17. Konstan argues that “one of the reasons why Aristotle does not include grief in his analysis of the several emotions in the *Rhetoric* may be the sense that it is more like raw pain or distress, and so a component of emotions, rather than a full-fledged emotion in its own right.”

identify clear instances of grief within the *Lives*, even though the Greek terminology is not perfectly reflected in the English terms for grief. Throughout this thesis, I have then chosen to refer to events wherein any such strong emotional reactions occur in response to the death of a φίλος as ‘grief episodes.’¹⁸

To understand the relationship between grief and virtue, and, consequently, the significance and function of grief episodes within the *Lives*, we must examine how Plutarch conceptualizes ‘virtue’. Plutarch advocates for a broad, ethical definition of virtue and is critical of other, more narrow definitions. For example, in *Coriolanus* 1.4, Plutarch criticizes the Latin term *virtūs* and what he sees as the Romans’ limited understanding of the concept of virtue. He argues that the Latin term only encompasses the sense of military virtue or courage rather than the broad range of senses that should be considered to relate to virtue. To Plutarch, this broad range is more appropriately conveyed by the all-encompassing Greek term ἀρετή, (‘ethical virtue,’ ‘goodness’).¹⁹ Unlike the Latin term *virtūs*, which only accounts for a specific masculine virtue, Plutarch considers ἀρετή a quality that belongs to both men and women.²⁰ Virtues such as self-control when grieving the loss of a φίλος apply to everyone, and it is here that we see the main connection between πάθος and virtue in Plutarch’s works.²¹ Grief (πάθος) and virtue intersect on a philosophical level for Plutarch and two of his essays from the *Moralia*, *De virtute morali* and

¹⁸ See Konstan 2016b: 11. Konstan states that “grief is, as we have observed, a response to the loss of a loved one: it is not simply hurt, although the Greek and Latin words that commonly designate grief – λύπη and *dolor* – may refer also to physical pain.” Although Konstan identifies a level of ambiguity in Greek terms pertaining to grief, instances of grief are easily identifiable once the contexts of such terms are taken into account.

¹⁹ See Fortenbaugh 1971; McDonnell 2003: 235-236, 238-240; Kristjánsson 2018: 122; Asirvatham 2019: 156-157. Plutarch equates the Latin *virtus* and the Greek ἀνδρεία (itself understood to refer to a specific kind of masculine, military virtue).

²⁰ See Antoniou 2020: 59-69.

²¹ For more on the connection between virtue and emotion, see Fortenbaugh 1971; Goldie 2009; Kristjánsson 2018: 122; Machek 2018: 255-256. Although the topic of Plutarch’s own individual views on πάθος is still relatively unexplored, πάθος has been established as an important and recurrent theme in Plutarch’s writings. Machek’s article claims to be among the first to try mapping out Plutarch’s perspective on the relationship between emotion and moral virtue in the *Moralia*.

Consolatio ad uxorem, help us understand both this intersection and his stance on the virtue of self-control in particular.

In the opening of *De virtute morali*, Plutarch outlines his model of moral virtue as composed of both emotion and reason, each of which performs a distinct function as part of this greater process.²² He characterizes emotion (πάθος) as the material matter (ύλη) and reason (λόγος) as the form (εἶδος) of this moral virtue (ἔθος). To attain virtue then, λόγος must guide πάθος towards a virtuous outcome; in this harmony, true happiness is achieved.²³ Plutarch opposes the Stoic claim that πάθος is a passionate and irrational force that is not separate from the rational (λόγος) part of the soul. He states: “according to them, passion is a vicious and intemperate version of reason, formed from an evil and undisciplined judgment which has acquired additional force and strength” (καὶ γὰρ τὸ πάθος εἶναι λόγον πονηρὸν καὶ ἀκόλαστον ἐκ φαύλης καὶ διημαρτημένης κρίσεως σφοδρότητα καὶ ῥώμην προσλαβούσης, *De virtute morali*, 441d). Plutarch claims instead that the rational λόγος and the irrational πάθος were separate entities that were connected within a larger system. These two entities work together but each performs a distinct function.²⁴

In the Stoic view, since πάθος is simply a bad (πονηρὸς) λόγος, and is ultimately interchangeable with a good λόγος in terms of its substance, the key to virtue is *apatheia*, a Stoic ideal which calls for the absence of emotion. Since Plutarch does distinguish between the substances of πάθος (as the matter of virtue) and λόγος (as the form), he considers *apatheia* to

²² Swain 1990: 128. Plutarch’s ideas concerning the composition of the soul are Aristotelian in their influence; Machek 2018: 261; Plut. *De vir. mor.* 440d: “It is my purpose to speak of that virtue which is called ‘moral’ and reputed to be so, which differs from contemplative virtue chiefly in that it has as its material the emotions of the soul and as its form reason, and to inquire what its essential nature is and how, by its nature, it subsists” (περὶ τῆς ἠθικῆς λεγομένης ἀρετῆς καὶ δοκούσης, ᾧ δὴ μάλιστα τῆς θεωρητικῆς διαφέρει, τῷ τὸ μὲν πάθος ύλην ἔχειν τὸν δὲ λόγον εἶδος, εἰπεῖν πρόκειται τίν’ οὐσίαν ἔχει καὶ πῶς ύφίστασθαι πέφυκε).

²³ See Antoniou 2020: 60.

²⁴ Machek 2018: 256. Machek argues that Plutarch’s use of the term *pathos* places it in opposition to *logos*.

be both undesirable and unfeasible.²⁵ Instead, he ultimately sides with the Peripatetics and Platonists in advocating for *metriopatheia*, the moderation of emotion.²⁶ For this reason, Plutarch extols the virtue of self-control, as it embodies the ideal of *metriopatheia* and ensures that reason, rather than emotion, influences behaviour. This, in turn, leads to virtue.

Moving beyond the general, conceptual relationship between πάθος and virtue, we see that certain emotions within the broader category of πάθος do enjoy a positive and even exalted reputation in Plutarch's works, while others are almost entirely condemned.²⁷ For example, in *De virtute morali*, Plutarch considers certain emotions, such as love (of various kinds), to foster virtue, but others, such as anger, to be harmful to virtue.²⁸ I argue that this variation indicates that Plutarch is ultimately concerned with the effect of specific emotions on one's judgment and behaviour. Indeed, this is why one's action (or perhaps reaction), rather than the emotion itself, is the ultimate factor facing moral judgment, and why Plutarch is concerned with the need for emotional discipline and self-control (*metriopatheia*).

In the *Consolatio ad uxorem*, a letter addressed to his wife following the death of their young daughter, Plutarch discusses the importance of self-control when experiencing grief. Although interpretations concerning the purpose of this letter vary,²⁹ I find Jo-Marie Claassen's

²⁵ See also Nikolaidis 2014: 350-372. Nikolaidis summarizes Plutarch's stance well: "The rational part should guide and control the irrational, yet moral virtue is not attained by the complete dominance of reason over the passions, but by its harmonious coexistence and cooperation with them (443c). Passions, therefore, are not to be eradicated altogether, as the Stoic ideal of *apatheia* enjoins, but only to be managed and kept under control; for passions, provided they do not revolt against reason to overthrow it, are not merely necessary but even useful, since they may intensify the virtues" (351-252).

²⁶ Machek 2018: 256.

²⁷ Machek 2018: 260. Evidence for the negative characterization of emotions by Plutarch comes from *De superstitione*, (165c) where he equates emotion with sickness.

²⁸ Machek 2018: 260; also see Plutarch's *De cohibenda ira*. Plutarch often appears more strictly concerned with the manner in which emotion is used than he is with the nature of the emotion itself. In Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1125b30-35, Aristotle, a key influence on Plutarch's philosophy, clarifies that anger may be deemed righteous in certain situations, especially in relation to injustice.

²⁹ Pomeroy 1999: 75. Alongside the various interpretations of this letter's purpose, there are also various interpretations of the letter's tone, with some seeing it as a detached response to the death of his daughter.

interpretation most compelling: she argues that the main purpose of this text is to praise his wife's self-control – rather than to insinuate that she is over-emotional in her grief.³⁰ Throughout this letter, he does not condemn his wife, or himself, for experiencing grief in the wake of their daughter's death, as this emotion is a natural consequence of their loss. However, he is firm in extolling the merits of emotional discipline. He expresses concern that allowing grief to overcome himself and his wife, and to endure without being checked, would lead to all memory of their beloved daughter becoming painful and that the pain associated with these memories would lead them to be avoided and, ultimately, forgotten:

ἀλλ' οὐχ ὀρῶ, γύναι, διὰ τί ταῦτα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ζώσης μὲν ἕτερπεν ἡμᾶς, νυνὶ δὲ ἀνιάσει καὶ συνταράξει λαμβάνοντας ἐπίνοιαν αὐτῶν. ἀλλὰδέδια πάλιν μὴ συνεκβάλωμεν τῷ λυποῦντι τὴν μνήμην, ὡσπερ ἡ Κλυμένη λέγουσα “μισῶ δ' ἀγκύλον τόξον κρανείας, γυμνάσιά τ' οἰχοίατο,” αἰεὶ φεύγουσα καὶ τρέμουσα τὴν ὑπόμνησιν τοῦ παιδός, ὅτι συμπαροῦσαν λύπην εἶχε· πᾶν γὰρ ἡ φύσις φεύγει τὸ δυσχεραίνόμενον.

But I do not see, my dear wife, why these memories of her, which delighted us while she was alive, should distress and disturb us as we think of them now. Instead, I worry that in avoiding these painful memories we would forget them entirely, like Clymenê, who “*said I hate the crooked bow of cornel wood, I hate the sports of youth: away with them!*” always shunning and avoiding what reminded her of her son, because it brought her pain; for nature shuns everything unpleasant. (608d-e)

Here Plutarch touches on the dangers of unending or excessive grief, and his opposition to this sort of unchecked grief is consistent and apparent within the *Lives* as well. To use Konstan's words, it is ‘lingering-grief’ that is reprehensible to Plutarch:³¹ “For each person handles grief in his own way. But once it has settled itself in with the passing of time and become his companion and housemate, it will not leave him even if he desperately wishes it to” (αὐτὸς γὰρ ἕκαστος εἰσάγει τὸ πένθος ἐφ' ἑαυτόν. ὅταν δὲ ἰδρυνθῇ χρόνω καὶ γένηται σύντροφον καὶ σύνοικον, οὐδὲ πάνυ βουλομένων ἀπαλλάττεται, 609f). Later in this same passage, Plutarch distinguishes

³⁰ Claassen 2004: 42; see Konstan 2016b: 24. Konstan argues that the letter also functions as a memorial for Plutarch's daughter.

³¹ Konstan 2016b: 12.

between genuine, proper grief, and excessive grief caused by ‘vain or empty opinion’ (κενήν δόξαν), a technical term used in Epicurean and Stoic doctrine in reference to false beliefs.³² I suggest that Plutarch identifies false beliefs as the guiding cause of improper grief in order to highlight the importance of being properly educated in philosophical matters (i.e., attaining the proper *paideia*); without the framework provided by the correct form of philosophical education, an individual could easily fail to attain virtue – even in matters as commonplace as grieving the loss of a φίλος.³³ Although Plutarch acknowledges that Roman laws exist to mitigate long-lasting grief, he emphasizes that this Roman practice stems from cultural values rather than being guided by philosophical education. Consequently, the Romans are susceptible to ‘false beliefs’ which leaves them vulnerable to acting without virtue in their grief; thus, they have dire need of Platonic *paideia*.

Finally, just as the virtue of self-control calls for a limited duration of non-excessive grief, the extent of one’s virtuousness is also determined by the relationship between the one who grieves and the one being grieved. Ancient Greek philosophers emphasized the importance of close relationships, φιλότης, in attaining ἀρετή and happiness, and to Aristotle, for example, friendship was so exceptionally valuable and so intrinsically tied to one’s own self that the death of a loved one constituted losing a part of oneself (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1171b35).³⁴ While Plutarch places a similar

³² Konstan 2016b: 24-25.

³³ Plutarch may well have been calling out opposing Roman standards of grief here, as some Roman writers, such as the Roman poet Statius, encouraged mourners to express their grief rather than contain it (*Silv.* 2.1.15-16, 2.6.1-18). However, Plutarch is clearly aware of the Roman institution of mourning practices which call for limiting of the duration of mourning, since he outlines some of these practices in *Numa* 12.2 (also referenced in *Coriolanus* 39.5): “Numa himself also regulated the periods of mourning according to ages. For instance, over a child of less than three years there was to be no mourning at all; over one older than that, the mourning was not to last more months than it had lived years, up to ten; and no age was to be mourned longer than that, but ten months was the period set for the longest mourning” (αὐτὸς δὲ καὶ τὰ πένθη καθ’ ἡλικίας καὶ χρόνους ἔταξεν· οἷον παῖδα μὴ πενθεῖν νεώτερον τριετοῦς, μηδὲ πρεσβύτερον πλείονας μῆνας ὧν ἐβίωσεν ἐνιαυτῶν μέχρι τῶν δέκα, καὶ περαιτέρω μηδεμίαν ἡλικίαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ μακροτάτου πένθους χρόνον εἶναι δεκαμηνιαῖον).

³⁴ For further analysis of the Aristotelian view of friendship, see Konstan 2016b: 22.

value on friendship, he distinguishes it from the significance and superiority of familial bonds; he specifically names the relationship between brothers and that between parents and their children (*De frat. amor.* 479d).³⁵ To Plutarch, the nature of a man's relationship with their brother was particularly revealing of their moral character and virtue.³⁶ From Plutarch's focus in this essay on how to practically foster a good relationship with one's brother, it is clear that he considers a rich and amicable bond between brothers to be a virtuous thing. Such a bond is necessary to establish harmony in one's own life – which, in turn, leads to the cultivation of personal virtues. Plutarch also extends this consideration to the familial bond between parents and children:

σκιαὶ γὰρ εἰσιν ὄντως αἱ πολλαὶ φιλίαι καὶ μιμήματα καὶ εἶδωλα τῆς πρώτης ἐκείνης, ἣν παισὶ τε πρὸς γονεῖς ἢ φύσις ἀδελφοῖς τε πρὸς ἀδελφούς ἐμπεποίηκε, κακείνην ὁ μὴ σεβόμενος μηδὲ τιμῶν ἄρα τινα πίστιν εὐνοίας τοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις δίδωσιν;

For most friendships are really just shadows and imitations of that first friendship with which Nature bonded children to parents and brothers to brothers; and can whoever does not respect or honour this friendship, give any assurance of goodwill to strangers? (*De frat. amor.* 479d)

Although Plutarch names the love of “children towards parents” here, I suggest that the same importance applies to the love of parents towards children as well, as this is reflected in Plutarch's commentary on the father-son relationships in the *Per-Fab* pair (see Chapter 4). Plutarch depicts the nature of these familial bonds as key determiners of one's behaviour towards others and revealing of one's true nature and virtues. An examination of Plutarch's depictions of a hero's grief over the death of a brother or son then provides an ideal scenario wherein the virtuousness of the heroes' execution of grief may be evaluated.

³⁵ Aasgaard 1997: 168; 170; Plut. *De frat. amor.* 478a-d. Here Plutarch discusses the need to treat this relationship separately from others. In 479d, Plutarch differentiates friendship from brotherhood, calling the former a mere imitation of the relationship that exists between parent and child, and between brothers.

³⁶ See Aasgaard 1997: 168. Aasgaard identifies Platonic tradition (and certain Aristotelian and Stoic ideas) as the basis for Plutarch's views on the importance of the relationship between brothers. Aasgaard argues that Plutarch's guiding principle in his evaluation of this relationship is the idea of harmony and that “the goal of his advice is that harmony must be restored.”

CHAPTER 2: PLUTARCH'S NARRATIVE AGENCY

While the content of Plutarch's *Lives* is based on historical people and events, his at times historically inaccurate and creative presentation of his heroes shows that he intends to subtly guide his reader toward a specific, pre-determined conclusion regarding a heroes' virtues.³⁷ Instead of placing the burden of interpreting a hero's character solely on the reader, Plutarch asserts control and directs his reader towards his own interpretation. Susan G. Jacobs captured the essence of Plutarch's intentions best: "his primary concerns are reflected in his selection of incidents to emphasize or ignore, as well as in his moulding of historical accounts to draw parallels to situations faced by the men in his audience."³⁸ For example, in the case of *Cato Minor* Plutarch selects and arranges his anecdotes and evidence to subtly depict Cato as less philosophically commendable and enlightened than his Roman audience and earlier Roman sources perceived him to be (see Chapter 5). The opposite is true for Pericles, as Plutarch selects stories from his life that emphasize and exaggerate his perceived virtue. In the *Aemilius Paulus-Timoleon* pair, Plutarch's inverted placement of the grief episodes emphasizes the centrality of grief to each figure's story as a whole and juxtaposes Aemilius' virtuous control of his emotions with Timoleon's dramatic failure to do so.

While Plutarch clearly exerts agency as a narrator, we cannot evaluate his narrative choices appropriately without evaluating which narrative elements are Plutarchan innovations and which are adapted or copied from his historical sources.³⁹ Mark Beck has identified Plutarch's narrative

³⁷ Pelling 1990: 35. Pelling has observed: "Quite evidently, Plutarch does not take over his historical material blindly: he does interesting things with it. Sometimes he criticizes it explicitly, as we have seen, making it clear why he is favouring one version or rejecting another; more often, he simply tacitly rewrites it, elaborating, reordering, giving different emphases, often revising the detail."

³⁸ Jacobs 2017: 132.

³⁹ Beck 2007: 400. Beck suggests these historical sources include: Herodotus, Thucydides, Theopompus, Ephorus, Timaeus, Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Sallust, and Livy.

voice to be most present in the following situations: 1) cases with an apparent emphasis on certain events, 2) the inclusion or exclusion of events that serve the larger purpose/themes of the work, 3) and the exaggeration or elaboration of details associated with those important themes.⁴⁰ The slowing or accelerating of the narrative or an episode's pace, the reordering of events, and explicit input from the narrator identifying the importance or unimportance of certain topics or themes are all good indications of when Plutarch is being innovative.⁴¹

A comparative evaluation (when available) is also useful to glean further insight into when Plutarch is exercising agency within a narrative. Timoleon's story, which serves as the second of our case studies, is covered by several ancient writers, of which three main authors' works survive: Plutarch, Cornelius Nepos, and Diodorus Siculus. The earlier sources that likely served as the basis for these authors' depictions are not extant, but Sven-Tage Teodorsson has suggested that the account by Timaeus of Tauromenium was the main influence for all three.⁴² If we consider this possible common origin to be accurate, a certain amount of overlap between these three writers' characterizations of Timoleon and the details of his story, including his grief episode, is to be expected. However, Plutarch's account of Timoleon's story differs significantly from that of Nepos and Diodorus' versions in his treatment of the murder of his brother, Timophanes, and Timoleon's subsequent grief over his death. His account of this event is far more elaborate and places a distinct emphasis on the impact of Timoleon's grief upon the trajectory of his life. I suggest that the uniqueness of Plutarch's presentation of the events which surround and shape

⁴⁰ Beck 2007: 400.

⁴¹ Beck 2007: 401.

⁴² See Talbert 1975: 22-23. Talbert notes: "The observations of Polybius, who tirades against Timaeus' inappropriately lavish praise of Timoleon, are sufficient to indicate that Timaeus must have covered Timoleon's career in some detail, while Timaeus uncritically generous treatment of Timoleon was well known in antiquity" (22). Timaeus' characterization of, and praise for, Timoleon must be understood to affect Plutarch's own depiction of this hero; cf. Teodorsson 2005: 215.

Timoleon's grief is indicative of the central importance and function of this episode within the *Life*.

Written around a century and a half before the works of Plutarch, Cornelius Nepos' *Life of Timoleon* follows a fairly similar layout to Plutarch's *Timoleon*, beginning with a brief exhortation of Timoleon's efforts against tyranny and an acknowledgment of his exceptionally good fortune (Nepos, *Life of Tim.* 1.1). However, unlike Plutarch's account, the initial order of events in Nepos' account is chronological, beginning with a concise overview of the murder of Timoleon's brother, Timophanes, and then proceeding to mention the political circumstances which led to Timoleon's selection as general.⁴³ Although Nepos also makes mention of Timoleon's grief following the murder of Timophanes, it is brief:

Mater vero post id factum neque domum ad se filium admisit neque aspexit quin eum fratricidam impiumque detestans compellaret. Quibus rebus ille adeo est commotus, ut nonnumquam vitae finem facere voluerit atque ex ingratorum hominum conspectu morte decedere.

As for his mother, after that incident, she would not allow her son to be in her presence, and she never saw him without cursing him and calling him an immoral brother-killer. This treatment affected Timoleon so badly that he sometimes considered ending his life, and, since the people were ungrateful for his actions, he wished to leave their presence by dying. (*Tim.* 1.5-6)

From this passage, it is clear that Plutarch did not invent the detail of Timoleon's emotional distress at the public's negative reception of his actions. Plutarch does, however, further exaggerate the impact of this reception on Timoleon's involvement in public life and even includes a brief philosophical evaluation of the problems associated with such a reaction (*Tim.* 6.1-7). Therefore,

⁴³ Plutarch does the reverse and begins *Timoleon* by outlining the circumstances in Syracuse that led to Timoleon's election as general and then shifting the narrative back in time to discuss Timoleon's involvement in the murder of his brother, Timophanes. The fact that Nepos' ordering of events is chronological, but Plutarch's is not, does not necessarily suggest that the analepsis was a purely Plutarchan innovation since my later discussion on Diodorus' ordering of events reveals potential influences from earlier sources on this matter.

I argue that Plutarch has purposefully and carefully crafted his own version of this episode to model the negative effects of a particular vice: over-reliance on public opinion for moral guidance.

Unlike Nepos' chronological version of events, Diodorus' account follows the same general structure as Plutarch's in first mentioning the nomination of Timoleon to the rank of general, and then discussing his involvement in the murder of his brother. This detail is interesting, as it suggests that Plutarch's choice to include an analepsis⁴⁴ at the beginning of *Timoleon* was potentially influenced, at least in part, by earlier renderings of this figure's story, rather than a uniquely Plutarchan narrative innovation. Regardless of the influences which may have shaped its placement, it is evident that the centrality of this moment in Timoleon's life is of key importance to Plutarch's intentions for this life, as he spends so much longer on the details thereof than either Diodorus or Nepos.⁴⁵

Diodorus' account differs notably from Plutarch's and Nepos' in spending far more time addressing the public outrage following Timophanes' murder and not making any reference to Timoleon's grief over the incident (Diod. Sic. *Library of History* 16.65). An even more intriguing difference is that, contrary to what is reported by both Nepos and Plutarch, Diodorus lists Timoleon as Timophanes' murderer rather than a mere bystander (Diod. Sic. 16.65.4).⁴⁶ Since Diodorus and Nepos' accounts of Timoleon's life were written well before Plutarch's, it is worth considering the possibility that Plutarch was aware of these two separate traditions concerning Timophanes' murder and consciously chose to report the version in which Timoleon does not commit the act himself.

⁴⁴ De Jong and Nünlist 2007 define analepsis as: "the narration of an event which took place earlier than the point in the story where we are" (xi). Conversely, a prolepsis is: "the narration of an event which will take place later than the point of the story where we are" (xiii).

⁴⁵ Teodorsson 2005: 216.

⁴⁶ Nep. *Tim.* 20.1.4 and Plut. *Tim.* 5.1-2 both list Timoleon as a bystander in the murder of Timophanes.

Diodorus' account also omits any mention of Timoleon's absence from public life following the murder of Timophanes, whereas Plutarch's version notes a twenty-year-long hiatus from public affairs (*Tim.* 7.1). Timoleon's supposed period of absence from public life is also missing from Nepos' account of his life, and this suggests there is a moral significance behind Plutarch's inclusion of this detail.⁴⁷ The divergence between Diodorus and Nepos' accounts and Plutarch's suggests a significant amount of creative license was taken by the latter, resulting in a somewhat fictionalized version of Timoleon's life.⁴⁸ Fictionalization is not uncommon in Plutarch's *Lives*, and evidence of narrative manipulation and historical inaccuracy in his work is well-known.⁴⁹ However, given the centrality of the grief episode to the *Aem-Tim* pair as a whole, any changes that Plutarch made to this episode and its surrounding details would impact the overall tone of the pair. Since Plutarch's intentions for the *Lives* were to convey and model virtuous behaviour for his readers, rather than present a recitation of historical facts like historiographers

⁴⁷ I suggest that this detail, and Plutarch's specificity regarding the time period of twenty years, were included to exaggerate and highlight the corruptive impact of grief on virtue if grief is left unchecked and becomes 'excessive'. In light of Plutarch's apparent distinction between political and private virtue, such an extended absence from public service is morally reprehensible.

⁴⁸ See Teodorsson 2005: 218. Plutarch's account is by no means entirely fictionalized, and Teodorsson notes that: "The archaeological finds indicate a marked increase of economic and cultural prosperity, not only in the Greek population, but also in the Sicel cities. The great difference between this new state of affairs and the previous situation shows that Timoleon was a formidable organizer and a great statesman. The change cannot be explained otherwise than as being due exclusively to his appearance on the stage of Sicilian politics in 344 B.C."

⁴⁹ For specific errors in Plutarch's works, see Russell 1963 on errors in *Coriolanus*. He notes, for example, that "the most striking [accidently error] is the confusion over the names of Coriolanus' women-folk: the mother becomes Volumnia instead of Veturia, the wife Vergilia instead of Volumnia" (22); on the historicity of Plutarch's *Lives*, see also Russell 1973: 42-43. Russell notes that Plutarch may have been also fallen prey to false sources; Pelling 1979. Beyond his manipulation of information, there also appear to be simple errors as well (79). Pelling notes that this could be due to Plutarch's reliance on memory rather than cross-referencing his sources at times: "Plutarch's memory is inevitably sometimes imprecise: thus a story from *pro Plancio* is garbled and emasculated at *Cic.* 6.3-4, and the quotations from Brutus' letters at *Brut.* 22 provide a pastiche of several different passages from two different letters" (93); Pelling 1990: 19-52. Pelling is kind in his assessment of the historicity of Plutarch's work, as he observes that Plutarch "does not always behave as we would, certainly; he tidies and improves, and in some cases he must have known he was being historically inaccurate. But the process has limits, and the untruthful tidying and improving is never very extensive" (41). He generally characterizes Plutarch's narrative manipulation as neither "fiction or invention, but creative reconstruction" (38). The point remains, of course, that regardless of his motivations for altering or supplying information his versions of events, the historicity of his work is still questionable at many points; Bosworth 1992, who writes in his opening remarks that: "In these enlightened days few would claim that Plutarch was in any sense writing history. Now one tends to give full weight to the explicit disclaimer in the *Life of Alexander* ('We are not writing history but lives.')" (56).

such as Diodorus and Nepos, changes like these would likely be for the purpose of strengthening his model of virtue.⁵⁰

These brief overviews of Nepos and Diodorus' accounts highlight the emphasis that Plutarch has placed on the mourning episode of this *Life*. In neither of the extant works of his predecessors is the impact of Timoleon's mourning over his brother's death so central as it is in Plutarch's. While Timoleon's involvement in the murder of his brother is a defining moment in each of these three accounts, the grief and mourning aspects of Timoleon's *Life* hold far more significance to his story as a whole in Plutarch's version because they are used to provide important commentary on Timoleon's character, in highlighting both his virtues and his vices.

⁵⁰ Conversely, these changes could be made for the purpose of modelling the consequences of the vices that oppose his model of virtue.

CHAPTER 3: AEMILIUS PAULUS-TIMOLEON

Plutarch's careful structuring of the beginning of the *Lives* demonstrates two points of significance to keep in mind as the analysis of the case studies moves forward: first, the content within the prologues and beginnings of the *Lives* will define the key elements of the hero's character for the rest of a *Life*; second, Plutarch strategically places (and paces) information within his narratives in order to emphasize certain flaws or virtues in the hero of that *Life*. In the case of the grief episodes, the placement and context of the episode affect whether the episode exemplifies vice or virtue just as much as the content of the episode itself.

The *Aemilius Paulus-Timoleon* pair is one of only three wherein the Roman *Life* is placed before the Greek one, with *Sertorius-Eumenes* and *Coriolanus-Alcibiades* accounting for the other two.⁵¹ In the case of *Aem-Tim*, Joseph Geiger has previously argued that the reason for this ordering is a conscious one and likely for effect: the impact of the catastrophic events recounted in the pair, as a whole, is magnified by their ordering. The majority of the first half of *Aemilius Paulus* is dedicated to establishing his success and good fortune, such as his military victory at the battle of Pydna, whereas the later chapters are dominated by discussions of his great misfortune, following the deaths of his sons (*Aem.* 24; 35.2). In *Timoleon* we see the opposite; the story begins on a note of great misfortune, with the murder of Timophanes, and is then followed by discussions of his later success and good fortune; namely, his military victory with the liberation of Sicily (*Tim.* 4.8; 35). As I have touched upon in Chapter 2, Plutarch shows a tendency to elaborate on certain narrative details or alter the order of chronological events to the impact and add emphasis to key elements. Therefore, I suggest that Plutarch's decision to invert the sequence of these

⁵¹ Geiger 1981: 104.

complementary events in *Aemilius Paulus* and *Timoleon* was done to draw further attention to each of these moments and promote their importance to the reader. Here, I accept Geiger's interpretation that this ordering was a conscious choice and the conclusion that the reason for this ordering was the impact of both men's personal misfortune on the tone of each *Life*. The central importance of the respective grief episodes to this pair is evident since these episodes contain dramatic emotional reactions and, therefore, provide key insight into Plutarch's assessment of these two heroes' virtue. In demonstrating the rewards of prioritizing civic duty over personal grief, or, conversely, the consequences of not doing so, these grief episodes are important elements of Plutarch's mimetic approach to imparting his philosophy of virtue to his reader.

Plutarch's unorthodox, primary placement of the Roman *Life*, and the placements of the respective grief episodes in the *Aem-Tim* pair, also create a rare reversal in which Plutarch's Roman hero is shown to be more virtuous than his Greek counterpart, at least in terms of Aemilius' embodiment of the ideal of *metriopatheia*. By contrast, in our second and third case studies, we will see that Plutarch's Greek heroes, Pericles and Phocion, end their *Lives* with their virtuous reputations intact or even improved, whereas his Roman heroes, Fabius and Cato, undergo a marked decline in their respective virtues. In fact, neither Aemilius nor Timoleon are subjected to character assassination at the end of their *Lives*, as Plutarch focuses instead on emphasizing their virtues. For example, R. J. A. Talbert has observed the following of Plutarch's characterization of Timoleon: "Throughout almost the whole Life Timoleon is portrayed as a man who cannot put a foot wrong, who always takes the most correct and honourable course of action in any situation."⁵²

⁵² Talbert 1975: 2.

One of Plutarch's main methods of characterization within the *Lives* is the inclusion of an anecdote or an alternative version of events.⁵³ These inclusions often occur at the end of the *Life*, at which point the character undergoes moral decline as a result of their poor reaction to a particular circumstance (see Chapter 4 on Fabius' degraded virtue). In the case of the *Aem-Tim* pair, the opposite is true as they both die on a high note. At the end of his life, Aemilius completes his official duties and then sails to Velia to recuperate from an illness; he then dies at his home after returning to Rome to perform a religious ceremony (*Aem.* 39). In *Timoleon*, Plutarch even includes a redemption arc of sorts, and Timoleon ends his life in a far better state than it starts; he is beloved by his people and his funeral was attended by thousands of grieving Corinthians (*Tim.* 39). This sense of redemption is magnified by Plutarch's use of the analepsis at the beginning of the *Life*, which arguably draws greater attention to Timoleon's involvement in the death of his brother, and highlights his distress at facing harsh censure from the public for his actions (5.2).

Besides his use of narrative techniques such as the analepsis, Plutarch's narrative style is also known to make use of the beginnings of *Lives*, particularly the prologues (proems), to set up the key ideas and virtues that he expects the reader to contemplate.⁵⁴ For example, in the prologue for *Aem-Tim*, Plutarch outlines the main theme of the pair as follows:

ἀνδρῶν οὐ μόνον ταῖς αἰρέσεσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς τύχαις ἀγαθαῖς ὁμοίως κεχρημένων ἐπὶ τὰ πράγματα, καὶ διαμφισβήτησιν παρεξόντων πότερον εὐποτιμὰ μᾶλλον ἢ φρονήσει τὰ μέγιστα τῶν πεπραγμένων κατῴρθωσαν.

The men were similar not only in the noble principles which they adopted, but also in the good fortune which they enjoyed in their conduct of affairs, and this will make it hard for my readers to decide whether the greatest of their successful achievements were due to their good fortune or their wisdom. (*Tim.* 0.7-8)

⁵³ Mossman 2018: 489. Again, *Demetrius* and *Cato Minor* are prime examples of this, as are *Fabius Maximus* and *Flaminius*.

⁵⁴ Pelling 2004: 406-407. See also Stadter 1988; Duff 2014.

As our narrator, Plutarch also clearly identifies fortune (τύχη) as the main theme of the *Aem-Tim* pair in *Aem.* 1.6.⁵⁵ Expanding on this basic identification, I suggest that the main message of this theme is that virtue is found in emotional resilience when one is faced with great misfortune. Once again, self-control is the essential virtue that Plutarch is concerned with.

Plutarch is keenly aware that many of Aemilius Paulus and Timoleon's successes and accomplishments have historically been attributed to good fortune alone, rather than to their virtuous characters. This is problematic to Plutarch's overall intentions for the *Lives*, whose characters were to serve as models for vice and virtue. If left unmitigated, this association damages the legitimacy of these two men as worthy subjects of the *Lives*, since it would imply that they did not earn success by merit of their virtue.⁵⁶ Thus, Plutarch chooses to alter the reader's initial impression of these heroes by emphasizing their virtues in relation to their fortune.⁵⁷ Plutarch's initial identification of these two heroes as the "best of his examples" (τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν παραδειγμάτων, *Tim.* 0.5) further supports this interpretation of Plutarch's intentions for his structural choices.

Aemilius Paulus

A close examination of *Aemilius Paulus* shows that Plutarch is skillfully using the timing and placements of certain (grief) episodes to draw the reader's focus toward this *Life's* themes of fortune and self-control; they, likewise, serve to shape the reader's perception of the Aemilius' character and virtue. In *Aemilius Paulus*, Plutarch chooses his more common approach of starting a *Life*, by providing an overview of Aemilius' family history, career, and general attributes.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ See Cairns 2014: 5-28; for discussions on Plutarch's philosophical views on fortune, see also Swain 1989: 274-75.

⁵⁶ See Teodorsson 2005: 215-226.

⁵⁷ For Plutarch's treatment of Timoleon, see Talbert 1975: 2-5.

⁵⁸ Beck 2007: 398.

While less rhythmically jarring than the beginning of *Timoleon*, the narrative timing of this *Life*'s beginning is still noteworthy: Plutarch includes an external analepsis in his discussion of Aemilius' ancestry and then moves through the vast majority of Aemilius' life very quickly.⁵⁹ In fact, Plutarch's main focus is on Aemilius' life after the age of sixty, leaving only Chapters 2-6 to cover Aemilius' childhood and early-middle adult life. In doing so, Plutarch positions Aemilius' late reelection to consul as the focal point of the *Life*. This mirrors the parallel episode in *Timoleon*, wherein Timoleon is elected to the rank of general at a fairly late point in his life – when he was presumably already past the age of forty (*Aem.* 10.1-5). In short, it is the 'second act' of both men's lives that are of interest to Plutarch.⁶⁰

As mentioned above, the prologue of a *Life* often identifies the key elements and virtues that Plutarch wants the reader to be aware of, and this is true of *Aemilius Paulus* as well. In the prologue to this *Life*, Plutarch tells us that Aemilius distinguished himself from the many other famous men of his time through his exceptional virtue. As with Timoleon, Plutarch lists Aemilius' virtues to include: "bravery, integrity, and trustworthiness" (ἀνδρείας καὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ πίστεως), accompanied by the declaration that: "in these virtues he naturally surpassed his contemporaries" (οἷς εὐθύς διέφερε τῶν καθ' ἡλικίαν, *Aem.* 2.6). As part of his careful characterization of Aemilius, Plutarch includes an anecdote detailing his diligence to his duties

⁵⁹ Interestingly, Plutarch traces Aemilius' ancestry to a son of the Greek philosopher, Pythagoras (*Aem.* 2.2). This Greek ancestry is an important detail, as this might serve as one of Plutarch's justifications for placing Aemilius first and positioning him as Timoleon's virtuous equivalent, unlike many of his Roman counterparts. Note that this detail is only reported by Plutarch (see Holland 2005: 269). According to Swain (1990), "Aemilius Paullus is the first hero we hear of who is said to receive 'a native and ancestral education' (*Aem.* 6.8), and in his note on this he states that while it is not clear what exactly this education entails, it is likely some sort of military training (132). I would amend his supposition and suggest instead that Plutarch is here potentially referring to Aemilius having received some form of Hellenic education (indeed he uses the word παιδείαν), in light of Plutarch's mention of his Greek ancestry (as the reference for his use of πάτριον).

⁶⁰ This focus on the achievements of these men during their advanced years suggests a Platonic influence, as in *An seni* 796d Plutarch praises Socrates for engaging in philosophy (which he considers akin to practicing politics) even as an old man; for more on Socratic influence in Plutarch's works, see Beck 2019: 311.

while serving as an Augur (*Aem.* 3.1-5). I suggest that the purpose of this anecdote is to demonstrate Aemilius' just and trustworthy character. Plutarch's use of this anecdote then exemplifies his preference for not just 'telling', but 'showing' the reader the nature of his hero's virtues (and vices).

As he does for Timoleon, Plutarch firmly rules out 'good fortune' as the reason for Aemilius' success when he recites the actions Aemilius took during the war against Perseus:

Αἰμίλιον δὲ Παῦλον, ὡς ἐξώρμησεν ἐπὶ στρατείαν, πλοῦ μὲν εὐτυχία καὶ ῥαστώνῃ χρῆσασθαι πορείας κατὰ δαίμονα τίθημι, σὺν τάχει καὶ μετ' ἀσφαλείας εἰς τὸ στρατόπεδον κομισθέντα· τοῦ δὲ πολέμου καὶ τῆς στρατηγίας αὐτοῦ τὸ μὲν τόλμης ὀξύτητι, τὸ δὲ βουλευμασι χρηστοῖς, τὸ δὲ φίλων ἐκθύμοις ὑπηρεσίαις, τὸ δὲ τῷ παρὰ τὰ δεινὰ θαρρεῖν καὶ χρῆσθαι λογισμοῖς ἀραρόσιν ὄρων διαπεπραγμένον, οὐκ ἔχω τῇ λεγομένῃ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς εὐτυχία λαμπρὸν ἀποδοῦναι καὶ διάσημον ἔργον οἷον ἐτέρων στρατηγῶν.

After Aemilius Paulus set out upon his campaign, he had a fortunate voyage and an easy passage and came speedily and safely to the Roman camp. I attribute this good fortune to divine favour; but seeing that the war under his command was brought to an end partly as a result of his fierce courage, partly by his excellent plans, partly by the eager assistance of his friends, and partly by his good judgment in times of danger, I cannot attribute his remarkable and brilliant success to his famously good fortune, as I can in the case of other generals. (*Aem.* 12.1-2)

Beyond Plutarch's general resistance to attributing Aemilius' successes to fortune rather than virtue, there is another connection between Plutarch's fixation on the issue of 'fortune' and his strategic placement of grief episodes within the pair: through his use of the grief episodes, Plutarch highlights each hero's agency. In these episodes, Plutarch's reader is confronted with a hero's reactions and behaviour rather than just a catalogue of their experiences; namely, the things outside of their control – agents of 'fortune'. Plutarch's scenario emphasizes a hero's virtue rather than their circumstances.

In *Aemilius Paulus*, there are two grief episodes that work together to perform the desired function of showcasing his virtuous character. The first episode occurs in Chapter 22, wherein Aemilius' youngest and most favoured son, Scipio (later Africanus), is missing and presumed dead

following the battle against the Macedonians. Although Scipio eventually turns up relatively unscathed, Plutarch still capitalizes on his brief faux-death. Here, Plutarch substantially slows down the pace of the narrative; he recounts the episode in great detail and focuses on the emotional impact of this presumed loss on Aemilius, who he describes as “a prey to great sorrow” (*Aem.* 22.2).⁶¹ The good fortune of Aemilius’ great victory is momentarily tempered by great misfortune, and this hard-fought time for celebration is turned into a frenzied search, followed by a miserable acceptance of the tragic loss. Plutarch’s placement of this episode, which comes around the midpoint of the *Life*, has a disruptive effect on one’s reading of the narrative and alters the story’s tone and pacing. It is a foreboding reminder of fortune’s fickle nature. Although Scipio is soon discovered to be unharmed, Plutarch’s final comment on this episode foreshadows another loss, one that would not be temporary: “So Fortune, postponing her jealous displeasure at the great success of Aemilius to a later time, then entirely restored his ability to take pleasure in his victory” (Αἰμιλίῳ μὲν οὖν τὴν τοῦ κατορθώματος νέμεσιν εἰς ἕτερον ἢ τύχη καιρὸν ὑπερβαλλομένη τότε παντελῆ τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀπεδίδου τῆς νίκης, *Aem.* 22.9).

The second grief episode occurs near the end of the *Life*, in Chapter 35, where Plutarch describes the aftermath of the (real) death of Aemilius’ two young sons as follows:

ἦσαν γὰρ αὐτῶ τέσσαρες υἱοί, δύο μὲν εἰς ἑτέρας ἀπωκισμένοι συγγενείας, ὡς ἤδη λέλεκται, Σκηπίων καὶ Φάβιος, δύο δὲ παῖδες ἔτι τὴν ἡλικίαν, οὓς ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκίας εἶχε τῆς ἑαυτοῦ γεγονότας ἐξ ἑτέρας γυναικός. ὣν ὁ μὲν ἡμέραις πέντε πρὸ τοῦ θριαμβεύειν τὸν Αἰμίλιον ἐτελεύτησε τεσσαρεσκαίδεκέτης, ὁ δὲ δωδεκέτης μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας θριαμβεύσαντος ἐπαπέθανεν, ὥστε μηδένα γενέσθαι Ῥωμαίων τοῦ πάθους ἀνάληπτον, ἀλλὰ φρῖξαι τὴν ὠμότητα τῆς τύχης ἅπαντας, ὡς οὐκ ἠδέσατο πένθος τοσοῦτον εἰς οἰκίαν ζήλου καὶ χαρᾶς καὶ θυσιῶν γέμουσαν εἰσάγουσα, καὶ καταμιγνύουσα θρήνους καὶ δάκρυα παιᾶσιν ἐπινικίοις καὶ θριάμβοις.

For Aemilius had four sons, of whom two, as I have already said, had been adopted into other families: Scipio and Fabius. The other two sons, the children of a second wife, were

⁶¹ The Greek word used here is πένθος, generally meaning ‘grief, sorrow’. Also translated as ‘unhappy event, misfortune, a misery’ and used in conjunction with ποιέω to indicate the act of mourning.

still boys and living at home with him. One of these sons, who was only fourteen years old, died five days before Aemilius celebrated his triumph, and the death of the second son, who was only twelve, happened three days after the triumph: there was no Roman who did not share Aemilius' grief; they all shuddered at the cruelty of Fortune, seeing that she had not hesitated to bring such great sorrow into a house that was full of honour, joy, and sacrifices, or to mingle lamentations and tears with songs of victory and triumphs. (*Aem.* 35.1-3)

The deaths of Aemilius' two young sons are significant and impactful losses and they overshadow the would-be joy of his triumph both before and after the fact. Aemilius' grief here is warranted and by no means presented as being excessive in affecting his public service. In addition, Plutarch makes clear in this passage that the grief over these losses was felt by both Aemilius and the public, just as the triumph would be celebrated by all as well. Here, I argue that Plutarch presents this as *shared grief* as a means of highlighting the φίλος relationship that exists between Aemilius and the state as a result of his political virtue. As we will see going forward, this φίλος relationship is in many ways modelled on the φίλος relationship between a father and his children. In light of this φίλος relationship between statesman and state, it is then natural that the state would share a mutual grief with Aemilius over this loss. Aemilius' grief is public, rather than private, because the distinction between public and private is blurred as a result of the φίλος relationship between statesman and state.

Moreover, the connection between the themes of fortune and grief within this pair now also emerges more clearly. Plutarch's presentation of the *Aem-Tim* grief episodes, and his accompanying commentary, suggest that he viewed the loss of beloved family members to be the cost of both Timoleon and Aemilius' exceptionally good fortune. The placement of these two episodes at the apparent climaxes of the story prevents the reader from lingering on Aemilius'

successes as they are tinged by the bitterness of loss and the implication that nothing comes without a cost.⁶²

Beyond his use of these episodes as a means of tempering the joyful reception of Aemilius' successes, the final episode contains further implications for the reading of this pair of *Lives*. In Chapter 36, Plutarch goes on to detail how Aemilius placed “public welfare” before “his private sorrow” (*Aem.* 36.1). In this passage, wherein Aemilius addresses an assembly of Romans following the deaths of his two sons, Plutarch emphasizes Aemilius' decision to prioritize giving comfort to the people over his own need to be comforted:

τὸν μὲν γε πρότερον τῶν παίδων ἀποθανόντα θάψας εὐθύς ἐθρίαμβευσεν, ὡς λέλεκται· τοῦ δὲ δευτέρου μετὰ τὸν θρίαμβον τελευτήσαντος συναγαγὼν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν τὸν Ῥωμαίων δῆμον ἐχρήσατο λόγοις ἀνδρὸς οὐ δεομένου παραμυθίας, ἀλλὰ παραμυθουμένου τοὺς πολίτας δυσπαθοῦντας ἐφ' οἷς ἐκεῖνος ἐδυστύχησεν

He buried the first of his sons who died, and then immediately celebrated the triumph, as I have said; and when the second died, after the triumph, he gathered the Roman people into an assembly and spoke to them as a man who did not ask for comfort, but rather sought to comfort his fellow-citizens in their distress over his own misfortunes (*Aem.* 36.2).

In placing the people's needs before his own, Aemilius shows both selflessness and great self-control. Thus, he is the exemplar of Plutarch's ideal standard of political virtue by placing even this deeply personal matter aside in order to serve the people as best he can. He is not characterized as heartless for being able to set aside his own grief, but, instead, is all the more virtuous in acting as a father to the Roman people. Aemilius tends to the people's distress as he would do for a φίλος and in characterizing his relationship to them in these familial terms, Plutarch makes Aemilius into a model of his ideal statesman.

⁶² For more on the mutability of fortune in this pair, see Cairns 2014: 5-28.

Timoleon

In *Timoleon*, the major grief episode is placed near the beginning of the *Life*, where it plays a key role in the establishment of Timoleon's character.⁶³ Following the prologue, Plutarch spends the early portion of the *Life* (*Tim.* 1-3) briefly outlining the events which led to Timoleon's appointment as general, at which time Timoleon was likely in his forties or fifties. However, in Chapters 3-7, Plutarch shifts the story to an earlier chronology where he describes Timoleon's childhood and the period of his early twenties;⁶⁴ as he does elsewhere, he uses his discussion of Timoleon's early life to establish his character and enumerate his virtues.⁶⁵

As with *Aemilius Paulus*, the selection of events discussed in the *Life* is rather intriguing as Plutarch focuses almost entirely on Timoleon's achievements as a general and his successful defeat of several tyrants – a period of activity that spans only eight years.⁶⁶ I argue that Plutarch's treatment of time in this *Life*, as far as his narrow focus on the aforementioned period, indicates that the content of any lengthy analeptic or proleptic episodes have heightened narrative importance since he felt the content of these episodes relevant to include despite their falling outside of the main timeline of the narrative. Such episodes must then contribute to the main lessons and intended takeaways of a *Life*. The grief episode is just such a lengthy analepsis and, therefore, Plutarch's placement of this episode, both chronologically and literally, signals its overall narrative importance.

What then is the content of this analepsis? As mentioned above, in this flashback, Plutarch outlines Timoleon's character by examining the attributes he displayed in his youth. He describes

⁶³ Recall, once again, the importance of the beginnings of *Lives* to Plutarch's characterization of a hero.

⁶⁴ Although his age is unspecified in the text, he appears to have been a young adult at this point.

⁶⁵ On Plutarch's use of a hero's childhood to establish their character, see Pelling 2002; Duff 2008; Soares 2014.

⁶⁶ Teodorsson 2005: 218.

Timoleon as “a lover of his country and an exceedingly gentle man, except in being a hater of tyrants and evil men” (φιλόπατρις δὲ καὶ πρᾶος διαφερόντως ὅσα μὴ σφόδρα μισοτύραννος εἶναι καὶ μισοπόνηρος, 3.4-5). In describing him as φιλόπατρις, Plutarch calls to mind the earlier standards of virtue discussed in Chapter 1: for Timoleon, as for Aemilius, the state is a φίλος.⁶⁷ Moreover, in labelling him a πρᾶος man, Plutarch identifies Timoleon as a man with self-control, the key virtue that Plutarch is concerned with when it comes to emotion.⁶⁸ Plutarch contrasts Timoleon’s character with that of his brother, Timophanes, whom he describes as “filled with a destructive desire for absolute power by the encouragement of worthless friends and foreign military adventurers” (ἔμπληκτον καὶ διεφθαρμένον ἔρωτι μοναρχίας ὑπὸ φίλων φαύλων καὶ ξένων στρατιωτικῶν, 3.6). Timoleon is said to have helped conceal Timophanes’ mistakes, presumably out of love for his brother (3.7),⁶⁹ and even saved him from death in a battle against the Argives and Cleonaeans after Timophanes was thrown from his horse (4.1). Following his promotion to commander of four hundred mercenaries, Timophanes stages a coup and declares himself a tyrant (4.4-5). At this point, Timoleon and two companions attempted to stage an intervention, but it does not go according to plan:

τοῦ δὲ Τιμοφάνους πρῶτον μὲν αὐτῶν καταγελῶντος, ἔπειτα δὲ πρὸς ὀργὴν ἐκφερομένου καὶ χαλεπαίνοντος, ὁ μὲν Τιμολέων ἀποχωρήσας μικρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ συγκαλυψάμενος εἰστήκει δακρύων, ἐκεῖνοι δὲ τὰ ξίφη σπασάμενοι ταχὺ διαφθείρουσιν αὐτόν.

⁶⁷ While φιλοπατρία does not innately create a φίλος relationship between a statesman and the state, I argue that Plutarch’s continued use of a fatherhood analogy at the ends of the *Lives* presented in this thesis suggests that a statesman should view and treat the state as he would his children. In this sense, Plutarch does envision a φίλος relationship between the statesman and the state, but I suggest that the quality of φιλοπατρία is a by-product of political virtue rather than the cause of political virtue and the resulting φίλος relationship.

⁶⁸ See Chapter 4 for a fuller discussion of the use and meaning of πρᾶος and πρᾶότης in Plutarch’s works.

⁶⁹ Talbert (1975) has previously noted that, although Plutarch makes a great effort to emphasize Timoleon’s virtues, there are moments when he alludes to him having some bad qualities as well: “Only twice is there an explicit hint of a less reputable quality, that of δεινότης (21.4; 37.5), though this is also brought out in Timoleon’s deceit at Rhegium (10), and perhaps, too, by his ingenuity in averting the soldiers’ δεισιδαιμονία and δυσελπιστία at the sight of parsley before battle (26.3)” (3). I would add an addendum to Talbert’s list here and suggest that Timoleon’s concealment (ἀποκρύπτων) of his brother’s unsavoury actions is strong further evidence of a propensity for deceit.

But Timophanes first mocked them, and then lost his temper and was violent, at which time Timoleon stepped back a little from him, covered his head and wept, while the other two, drew their swords and swiftly killed him. (*Tim.* 4.8)

The grief that Timoleon experiences during and following this incident comes in two distinct phases. In this first phase, Timoleon is grieving the death of his brother and appears distraught over the murder that fate has forced him to participate in;⁷⁰ just as for Aemilius, there is a price for Timoleon's later fortune, and in this case, it is the life of his brother. This first phase is the most genuine 'grief', as far as meeting our earlier definition for grief as being "the πάθος that results from the loss of a φίλος". Plutarch is not critical of Timoleon's grief here, as such grief is warranted and attests to his love for his brother – which Plutarch has deemed an important and virtuous bond (see Chapter 1).

In the next phase, however, Timoleon's 'grief' (πάθος in the more Aristotelian sense) overcomes his reason. Although some took a charitable view of his actions, Timoleon still earns the vitriol of many of his countrymen for his involvement in the murder, and their censure drives him to a state of ἀθυμία (despondency):

οἱ δὲ μὴ δυνάμενοι ζῆν ἐν τῇ δημοκρατίᾳ καὶ πρὸς τοὺς δυνάστας ἀποβλέπειν εἰωθότες τῷ μὲν θανάτῳ τοῦ τυράννου προσεποιοῦντο χαίρειν, τὸν δὲ Τιμολέοντα λοιδοροῦντες ὡς ἀσεβῆς ἐξεργασμένον καὶ μυσῶδες ἔργον εἰς ἀθυμίαν περιέστησαν.

However, those who were unable to live in a democracy and were accustomed to court the favour of men in power, while they pretended to rejoice the death of the tyrant, by abusing Timoleon and calling him a perpetrator of an impious and abominable deed, they drove him into despondency. (*Tim.* 5.2)

This 'depressive' episode then worsens further when Timoleon's mother also rejects him upon learning of his actions: upon being turned away from his mother's home, Plutarch tells us that, "he

⁷⁰ In another interesting parallel, Timoleon is here grieving the death of his brother before it has even happened, which is somewhat reminiscent of Aemilius' grief over the faux-death of his son in his 'first' grief episode.

completely fell prey to grief and, being so disturbed in mind, he became determined to starve himself to death” (τότε δὴ παντάπασι περίλυπος γενόμενος καὶ συνταραχθεὶς τὴν διάνοιαν ὥρμησε μὲν ὡς διαφθερῶν ἑαυτὸν ἀπέχεσθαι τροφῆς, *Tim.* 5.3).⁷¹ Timoleon is here so overcome by his irrational πάθος that he is only saved from suicide by the pleas of his friends (5.4); even after this de-escalation, Timoleon is essentially guided by πάθος rather than λόγος for the considerable sum of nearly twenty years, as this is how long his resulting absence from public affairs is said to last (5.4, 7.1). Here, Timoleon’s self-control is shockingly absent, as is his earlier dedication to the state.

So, what is then the purpose of both the analeptic episode as a whole and its emphatic detailing of Timoleon’s grief? Plutarch’s use of this analepsis is then strategic (see pg. 16). While the main intention behind Plutarch’s emphatic placement of the flashback episode is likely to stress Timoleon’s devotion to his city-state and his moral opposition to tyranny, the added elaboration on the extent and impact of his grief is not merely for the purpose of rounding out the details of the story. Instead, the detailed delivery of the emotional elements of the episode and the repeated mention of this grief and its effect on Timoleon’s mental state shape the tone of the flashback and the reader’s overall impression of Timoleon’s character, both past, and present. Indeed, I suggest that Plutarch’s initial characterization of Timoleon’s grief, when he weeps as his brother is dispatched, was intended to serve as a defence of his actions, as he did so out of love for the state rather than hatred for his brother. Plutarch provides strong support for this interpretation with his inclusion of Telecleides’ exhortation of Timoleon, following his nomination as general:

Τηλεκλείδης ὁ τότε καὶ δυνάμει καὶ δόξει πρωτεύων ἐν τῇ πόλει, παρεκάλει τὸν Τιμολέοντα περὶ τὰς πράξεις ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα εἶναι καὶ γενναῖον. “Ἄν μὲν γάρ,” ἔφη, “καλῶς ἀγωνίση, τύραννον ἀνηρηκέναι δόξομεν, ἂν δὲ φαύλως, ἀδελφόν.”

⁷¹ LSJ defines περίλυπος as ‘very sad, deeply grieved’.

Telecleides, who at that time was the most well-reputed and influential man in the city, rose up and praised Timoleon for being a noble and brave man in his actions. “For if,” said he, “you were to be judged fairly, we would think of you as a killer of tyrants; but if poorly, as a killer of brothers.” (*Tim.* 7.2)

In reframing the circumstances and motivations of Timoleon’s involvement in his brother’s murder in this light, Plutarch restores his virtuous reputation.

However, while the rest of the *Life* is coloured by the magnitude of Timoleon’s selfless actions and his involvement in the murder of his brother is ultimately said to be motivated by this same sense of extraordinary selflessness, the same cannot be said of his twenty-year-long retreat from public service. In this last matter, Timoleon does not escape Plutarch’s criticism. Unlike his grief over Timophanes’ death, Timoleon’s πάθος following his mother and the public’s rejection of him is continued and excessive, which is precisely what Plutarch cautions against in the *Consolatio ad uxorem*; Plutarch does not consider such uncontrolled πάθος to be virtuous. Here it is worth noting that Plutarch places Telecleides’ commentary only after his philosophical evaluation of Timoleon’s intensely negative emotional reaction to the criticism he receives from his fellow citizens and family. Indeed, Chapter 6 is devoted to identifying the faults inherent to Timoleon’s reaction and identifying the change needed to rectify it:

οὕτως αἱ κρίσεις, ἂν μὴ βεβαιότητα καὶ ῥώμην ἐκ λόγου καὶ φιλοσοφίας προσλάβωσιν ἐπὶ τὰς πράξεις, σείονται καὶ παραφέρονται ῥαδίως ὑπὸ τῶν τυχόντων ἐπαίνων καὶ ψόγων, ἐκκρουόμεναι τῶν οἰκείων λογισμῶν. δεῖ γὰρ οὐ μόνον, ὡς ἔοικε, τὴν πράξιν καλὴν εἶναι καὶ δικαίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν δόξαν, ἀφ’ ἧς πράττεται, μόνιμον καὶ ἀμετάπτωτον, ἵνα πράττωμεν δοκιμάσαντες, μηδ’ ὡς περ οἱ λίχνοι τὰ πλήσμια τῶν ἐδεσμάτων ὀξυτάτη διώκοντες ἐπιθυμία τάχιστα δυσχεραίνουσιν ἐμπλησθέντες

So it is true that the judgements of men, unless they acquire stability and strength from reason and philosophy for the activities of life, are easily unsettled and misled by casual praise and blame, being forced out of their original way of thinking. For it would seem that not only our action must be noble and just, but also that the convictions which drive our actions must be enduring and unchangeable, so that we may be satisfied with what we are about to do, and that mere weakness may not make us dejected over the actions which were taken after our memory of their righteous motivations fades away. (*Tim.* 6.1-2)

Here Plutarch is referencing the need for philosophical education, *paideia*, in order to strengthen reason (λόγος); this strengthening of λόγος in relation to πάθος will restore harmony and, thus, virtue. Plutarch's message is then clear: virtue is unsustainable without a strong foundation for one's convictions. Without this internal resilience, an individual will struggle, or even fail, to withstand the emotional repercussions and social alienation that may come with acting virtuously.

In the case of this pair then, Aemilius stands firm as the ideal example of how a statesman should grieve virtuously, as he places the needs of the state before his own grief. He remains composed and provides comfort to the public when his young sons die, rather than seeking his own comfort. On the other hand, Timoleon is only partially successful at placing the needs of the state before his own. He makes a personal sacrifice in allowing the murder of his beloved brother for the good of the state, thereby saving Corinth from a tyrant, but fails to weather the public's outrage appropriately. While Timoleon is indeed later redeemed, Plutarch uses his grief episode to exemplify how not to grieve, in juxtaposition with Aemilius' more successful, virtuous approach.

CHAPTER 4: PERICLES-FABIUS MAXIMUS

Plutarch juxtaposes the character, deeds, and experiences of Pericles and Fabius with great regularity.⁷² Among the shared characteristics that are juxtaposed is their aversion to superstition (*Per.* 6.1; *Fab.* 4.3), their frank and cautious manner (*Per.* 8.4; *Fab.* 1.3), and their struggle against the public's poor perception of them (*Per.* 9.2; 11.4; *Fab.* 7.2).⁷³ Plutarch also extends his application of this comparative approach beyond such ephemeral qualities, applying it to specific, similar experiences that are shared by his heroes as well. Pericles' and Fabius' grief over the death of their respective sons are also among the many episodes that are juxtaposed in such a way as to lead a reader to compare the heroes' reactions to these moments of great tragedy. These grief episodes are juxtaposed by virtue of their similar content, but also by their placement within the narrative itself, as both episodes occur close to the end of each *Life* and serve to define the virtuous state of each figure within their final days. Up till this moment in each narrative, the virtuousness of the two heroes remains fairly equal, but through his juxtaposition of the grief episodes, Plutarch contrasts each hero's reactions both during and following personal tragedy. By means of their placement, Plutarch emphasizes Pericles' sustained (if not improved) final state of virtue and Fabius' own diminished virtue.⁷⁴

The most important of all the characteristics that Plutarch compares in this pair is the heroes' shared virtue of *πραότης* (gentleness): "the men were alike in their virtues, especially in

⁷² Beck 2022: 164-165. Beck discusses evidence of intentional contrasting between Greek and Greek/Roman and Roman *Lives* as well.

⁷³ Both appear to be perceived as tyrants to some degree by their respective publics. *Per.* 39.5 is particularly telling as it was placed at the end of the life: "That objectionable power of his, which they had used to call monarchy and tyranny, seemed to them now to have been a saving bulwark of the constitution..."; also see Stadter 1975: 77.

⁷⁴ Stadter 1975: 80-81, 85. Stadter has likewise previously identified Fabius as the weaker of the two heroes.

their gentleness and righteousness, and by their ability to endure the follies of their peoples and of their colleagues in office” (ἀνδρῶν κατὰ τε τὰς ἄλλας ἀρετὰς ὁμοίων, μάλιστα δὲ πραότητα καὶ δικαιοσύνην, καὶ τῷ δύνασθαι φέρειν δήμων καὶ συναρχόντων ἀγνωμοσύνας, 2.4). Indeed, this virtue of πραότης has been identified as the main thematic focus of this pair.⁷⁵ According to Aristotle, πραότης (gentleness) is: “the observance of the mean in relation to anger” (πραότης δ’ ἐστὶ μεσότης περὶ ὀργᾶς, ἀνωλύμου” δ’ ὄντος τοῦ μέσου, *Eth. Nic.* 1125b26). Aristotle explains that a ‘gentle-tempered’ man is, in essence, a man with self-control, a man not guided by emotion – though not emotionless, as they may become angry if righteous justice demands it (1125b30-35). Plutarch appears to draw from Aristotle’s definition of πραότης in his own use of this term.⁷⁶ Since Plutarch depicts both Pericles and Fabius to be gentle-tempered, rather than passionate, throughout much of their respective *Lives*, Fabius’ faltering πραότης *following* the grief episode is shocking in its inconsistency with his earlier fortitude. Even more intriguing is that Pericles’ own lapse in self-control *during* the grief episode strengthens, rather than condemns, his virtue in Plutarch’s eyes. This contradiction of the actual execution and presentation of the two grief episodes and Plutarch’s previously established views regarding πραότης and *metriopatheia* speaks to Plutarch’s creative dedication to a ‘bigger picture’ (i.e., the ultimate mimetic purpose of this pair and the *Lives* as a larger work).⁷⁷

The reader’s perception of the hero’s virtue may be altered either for better or for worse depending on the presentation of the grief episodes. The nature of this presentation is, in turn,

⁷⁵ Jacobs 2017: 128. The focus on πραότης as a central theme is also noted in: Martin Jr 1960: 65–73; Mueller 1995: 297; Pelling 2010: 228. On the use of this term within this pair, Stadter (1975: 80-82) tells us that “the word πραότης and its cognates are used more frequently in this than in any other pair of lives.” It is used sixteen times, with the next highest count of six appearing in the *Gracchi-Agis* and *Cleomenes* foursome.

⁷⁶ See Martin Jr 1960: 65-73.

⁷⁷ Beck 2019: 313. Beck captures Plutarch’s goal best with his assessment that “his literary mission in the *Lives* is the construction of biographies that teach his readership to be good politicians and responsible citizens.”

determined by Plutarch's larger intentions as to how a hero should be perceived. In acknowledging this contradiction between expectation and execution, we uncover an important narratological purpose of these grief episodes; namely, to influence the reader's perception of each hero's virtue.

Pericles

Plutarch describes Pericles' reaction to the death of his last legitimate son, Paralus, as uncharacteristically emotional. While at first glance this would appear to be a condemnable reaction based on Plutarch's established endorsement of *metriopatheia*, I suggest that the opposite is true in this particular case. Given the context in which this episode occurs, the emphasis on Pericles' intensive grief in this episode actually ameliorates the reader's perception of Pericles' moral calibre. Plutarch begins by outlining the discordant relationship between Pericles and his eldest legitimate son, Xanthippus. Pericles, who is known for his frugality, refuses to pay a loan that Xanthippus has taken out (in his father's name) from a family friend – a loan acquired on account of the 'too-small' allowance given to him by his father (*Per.* 36.1-2). Pericles not only refuses to pay this loan but files a legal suit against his son for having taken out the loan in his name. Xanthippus is then so incensed at his father that he proceeds to slander and mock him, and the relationship between father and son remains sour up to the death of Xanthippus, who dies during the plague (36.3).

This poor relationship between father and son is a stain on Pericles' reputation, as Plutarch has elsewhere (in *De fraterno amore*) made clear the need for good relations between brothers, and parents and their children. Although Plutarch does not outright condemn Pericles for his part in this conflict at any point, he is clearly aware that this situation constitutes a 'bad look' for his hero. For the reader to accept Pericles as the paragon of virtue that Plutarch intends him to be, something must be done to combat the unflattering light this fallout casts upon Pericles. In terms

of Plutarch's strategic arrangement and placement of narrative material, the episode of familial strife is used to prime the grief episode, which comes directly afterward: the familial strife episode contains a situation that portrays Pericles in an unfavourable light, which is then corrected in the grief episode. Without this episode of familial strife preceding it, the grief episode would not have the same impact on the reader's perception of Pericles' character and virtue. In light of this, I suggest that the grief episode, in a collaboration with the episode of familial strife, is part of a larger effort by Plutarch to defend the moral character of Pericles to his audience. It is within this grief episode that Pericles' love for his family is most evident. Through his intensely emotional reaction, his affection for his sons is legitimized – thereby absolving him of the poor reputation he earned for his terrible relationship with Xanthippus.

Plutarch's execution of this episode is impressive, demonstrating his mastery at sculpting a narrative and its internal message. Here, Plutarch succeeds at improving the reader's perception of Pericles, by softening his reputation and by highlighting his grief over the death of Paralus. Plutarch does this by first telling us that Pericles lost his sister and most of his friends and colleagues during the plague, but that: "he did not, however, give up, or abandon his composure because of his misfortunes" (οὐ μὴν ἀπεῖπεν οὐδὲ προὔδωκε τὸ φρόνημα καὶ τὸ μέγεθος τῆς ψυχῆς ὑπὸ τῶν συμφορῶν, 36.4). Plutarch then continues to emphasize this aspect of Pericles' character in the following lines, stating that: "he was not even seen to weep at either the funeral rites, or at the grave of any of his connections, until he lost the very last of his own remaining legitimate sons, Paralus" (ἀλλ' οὐδὲ κλαίων οὐδὲ κηδεύων οὐδὲ πρὸς τάφῳ τινὸς ὤφθη τῶν ἀναγκαίων, πρὶν γε δὴ καὶ τὸν περίλοιπον αὐτοῦ τῶν γνησίων υἱῶν ἀποβαλεῖν Πάραλον, 36.4). Pericles has heroically remained composed despite facing incredible loss, but the death of Paralus, his son, is his breaking point. Plutarch's empathetic portrayal continues:

ἐπὶ τούτῳ δὲ καμφθεὶς ἐπειρᾶτο μὲν ἐγκαρτερεῖν τῷ ἥθει καὶ διαφυλάττειν τὸ μεγαλόψυχον, ἐπιφέρων δὲ τῷ νεκρῷ στέφανον ἠττήθη τοῦ πάθους πρὸς τὴν ὄψιν, ὥστε κλαυθμόν τε ῥῆξαι καὶ πλῆθος ἐκχέαι δακρύων, οὐδέποτε τοιοῦτον οὐδὲν ἐν τῷ λοιπῷ βίῳ πεποικώς.

Even though he was weighed down by this stroke of bad luck, he still tried to persevere in his habit and maintain his positive attitude, but as he laid a wreath upon his dead son, he was overcome by his anguish at the sight, so much so that he broke out into wailing, and shed many of tears, although he had never done such thing before in all his life. (36.5)

Even in so short a passage, Plutarch borders his account of Pericles' emotional display on one side with this assertion that he tried to maintain his composure and, on the other, that he had never lost his composure in this manner before. The effect is then twofold: Plutarch is redeemed as a loving, caring father, and his virtue as a gentle-tempered man is intact – given that this reaction was so uncharacteristic and unique. The commentary that follows this episode lends further credence to this interpretation, as it presents Pericles as strongly affected by his grief, but ultimately disciplined enough to continue his role as a statesman and serve the people: “He was lying dejectedly at home because of his sorrow, but was persuaded by Alcibiades and his other friends to resume his public life” (ἀθυμῶν καὶ κείμενος οἴκοι διὰ τὸ πένθος ὑπ’ Ἀλκιβιάδου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπέισθη φίλων προελθεῖν, 37.1). This contrasts nicely with Plutarch's criticism of Timoleon's excessive grief – which prevents him from performing his duty for over twenty years.

I suggest that it is also no coincidence that this redemption of Pericles comes so close to the end of his life, following the height of Pericles' moral and political achievements in Chapters 29-35. This episode assures the reader that Pericles' virtue has withstood even the greatest of misfortunes. I would argue that the grief episode actually softens Pericles' character enough to strengthen the reader's perception of his *πράοτης*, not just redeem that which was lost during the course of his harsh actions against Xanthippus. Moreover, despite the intensity of his grief and his brief absence from public service, in returning to his duties Pericles' fulfills Plutarch's main requirement for political virtue, as he sets aside his personal need to grieve and ultimately

prioritizes the needs of the people above his own. This episode then neatly exemplifies how Plutarch distinguishes between the expectations placed on a politician and those placed on ordinary citizens when it comes to one's moral responsibilities.

Fabius Maximus

Given his use of a multi-faceted comparative structure in this pair, Plutarch's depiction of Fabius Maximus mirrors that of Pericles in many ways, including its emphasis on his gentleness, or, rather, self-control. For example, Plutarch describes Fabius' approach to dealing with civil unrest:

τὰς δ' ἀποστάσεις τῶν πόλεων καὶ τὰ κινήματα τῶν συμμάχων ὁ Φάβιος μᾶλλον ᾤετο δεῖν ἡπίως ὁμιλοῦντα καὶ πράως ἀνείργειν καὶ δυσωπεῖν, μὴ πᾶσαν ὑπόνοιαν ἐλέγχοντα καὶ χαλεπὸν ὄντα παντάπασι τοῖς ὑπόπτοις.

Fabius thought that the revolts of the cities and the political uproar of the allies ought to be restrained by and reproached with mild and controlled measures, without testing every suspicion and showing harshness in every suspicious case. (*Fab.* 20.1)

The word used by Plutarch to describe Fabius' approach here is actually 'πράως' (an adverbial form of *πραῖος*, literally meaning 'mild, gentle, meek'), making his emphasis of this particular virtue during this moment apparent. However, Fabius loses this virtue and others near the end of his life, when he is overcome by his then all-consuming (and unhealthy) need for caution.⁷⁸ The downward spiral of Fabius' character begins not long after the former attestation of his gentleness, in Chapter 22, when he is said to have ordered the Bruttians to be killed: "at this point, however, Fabius seems to have been overcome by his ambition" (ἐνταῦθα μέντοι δοκεῖ φιλοτιμίας ἥττων γενέσθαι, 22.4). This action is most shocking in its strong contrast to Fabius' comparatively gentle and merciful approach to similar circumstances in the aforementioned episode from two chapters prior and marks a sharp decline for Fabius.

⁷⁸ Stadter 1975: 84.

Fabius' previously virtuous caution has now become so excessive that it leads to fearmongering as he convinces the Romans to oppose Scipio and his policies. Plutarch inserts his own, revealing, interpretation of the reasons for this change after the destruction of Fabius' virtue is completed several chapters later:

ἔοικα δ' ὀρμηῆσαι μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὁ Φάβιος πρὸς τὸ ἀντιλέγειν ὑπὸ πολλῆς ἀσφαλείας καὶ προνοίας, μέγαν ὄντα δεδιῶς τὸν κίνδυνον, ἐντεῖναι δέ πως μᾶλλον ἑαυτὸν καὶ πορρωτέρω προαχθῆναι φιλοτιμίᾳ τινὶ καὶ φιλονεικίᾳ, κωλύων τοῦ Σκηπίωνος τὴν αὔξησιν

Now it is likely that Fabius began this opposition because of his great caution and prudence, in fear of the danger, which was great; but that he grew more violent and went to greater lengths in his opposition because of his ambition and contentiousness, in an attempt to check the rising influence of Scipio. (25.4)

In relation to this degradation of Fabius' virtue, his grief episode stands out as one of his final moments of outstanding self-control.

Plutarch includes an anecdote on the strong bond and affection between Fabius and his son, Fabius [Minor]. He recounts an encounter between the father and son following the appointment of Fabius [Minor] as consul. Rather than allowing his father to approach him on horseback, the younger Fabius enforced the custom of having him approach on foot (as befit his position as consul). While the bystanders were greatly offended (on Fabius' behalf) that he would treat his father as he would any other citizen, Fabius was proud of his son for having acted according to his station:

καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους ἠνίασε τὸ ἐπίταγμα, καὶ σιωπῇ πρὸς τὸν Φάβιον ὡς ἀνάξια πάσχοντα τῆς δόξης ἀπέβλεψαν· αὐτὸς δ' ἐκεῖνος ἀποπηδήσας κατὰ τάχος, θᾶπτον ἢ βάδην πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν ἐπειχθεῖς, καὶ περιβαλὼν καὶ ἀσπασάμενος, “Εὖ γε,” εἶπεν, “ὦ παῖ, φρονεῖς καὶ πράττεις, αἰσθόμενος τίνων ἄρχεις καὶ πηλίκης μέγεθος ἀνείληφας ἀρχῆς. οὕτω καὶ ἡμεῖς καὶ οἱ πρόγονοι τὴν Ῥώμην ἠύξήσαμεν, ἐν δευτέρῳ καὶ γονεῖς καὶ παῖδας ἀεὶ τῶν τῆς πατρίδος καλῶν τιθέμενοι.”

All the rest were offended at this command, and implied by their silent gaze at Fabius that this treatment of him was inappropriate in consideration of his high position. But Fabius himself sprang quickly from his horse, almost ran to his son, and embraced him affectionately. “My son,” he said, “you think and act rightly. You understand what kind of

nation has made you its officer, and what a high office you have received from the people. It was in this spirit that both we and our forefathers exalted Rome, a spirit which places the good of the country over that of parents and children.” (24.2)

Fabius’ deference to his son, and his son’s respect for his father, show a far more positive relationship than that between Pericles and Xanthippus. Thus, I suggest, both on account of the similarity of situations, in dealing with the respect of a son for his father, and the similar, near-terminal locations of the two episodes, that the passage above was intentionally juxtaposed with the equivalent one in *Per.* 37.

Following this anecdote, Plutarch reports the death of the younger Fabius and tells us that Fabius bore this misfortune “with composure, like a wise man and a good father” (καὶ τὴν μὲν συμφορὰν ὡς ἀνὴρ τε φρόνιμος καὶ πατὴρ χρηστὸς ἤνευκε μετριώτατα, *Fab.* 24.4). In this, Fabius also meets the requirements for appropriate, virtuous grief, as set out by Plutarch in the *Consolation ad uxorem*, where he calls for discipline in not allowing grief to overcome oneself.⁷⁹ In fact, Fabius arguably comes closer to the ideal that Plutarch calls for than his counterpart, Pericles. However, the placement of this episode is, once again, the deciding factor as far as its impact on the reader’s perception of Fabius’ moral character. In the very next section, Plutarch begins to alter the character of Fabius, confronting his reader with the unambiguous loss of this Roman hero’s virtue. When taken by itself, the episode is a textbook example of appropriate, virtuous grieving for a politician. However, by placing the grief episode and the passage pertaining to his vicious treatment of the Bruttians back-to-back, Plutarch dramatically emphasizes this sharp decline in Fabius’ virtue and moral integrity.

⁷⁹ Plutarch is not explicit in defining what amount of time constitutes ‘excessive grief’, and I would argue that this concept is better understood as excessive in the sense of outcome rather than in the sense of duration. For example, those who neglect their duties or behave badly as a result of their grief would be seen to grieve ‘excessively’ (see *Consolatio ad uxorem* 608f4-609d5) in that their grief has negatively impacted their virtue. For a statesman, neglect of duties or a lack of consideration for public welfare as a result of one’s own grief may then be considered ‘excessive’, as it leads to the corruption of values and promotes personal needs rather than the needs of the public – in essence, excessive grief causes the corruption of political virtue.

So, what then is the effect of Plutarch's application of a comparative structure to the *Per-Fab* pair as a whole? Through his crafting and structuring of *Pericles*, he portrays the end of Pericles' life as the pinnacle period of his moral achievements (*Per.* 29-35), having had a rather slow start with his initial hesitancy to serve in a political capacity.⁸⁰ By contrast, *Fabius* is structured in reverse, placing the climax of Fabius' moral achievement close to the beginning of the *Life*, in Chapters 4-13, and ending with the collapse of Fabius' moral fortitude. This inverted structure resembles that of the *Aem-Tim* pair, with its transition from good fortune to misfortune (at the end) in *Aemilius Paulus* and then misfortune (at the beginning) to good fortune in *Timoleon*. I argue that this structural choice is further evidence of the significance of the grief episodes within the *Per-Fab* pair and revealing of their larger function: to extol the virtuous achievements of the Greek past, as embodied by Pericles, in contrast to the unstable virtues (as a result of their lack of proper *paideia*) of the Roman people.

In his desire to defend Greek excellence and accomplishments to his Roman audience,⁸¹ Plutarch aims to present Pericles as the more virtuous of the two heroes in this pair, since he is responsible for much of the great Greek architectural achievements which serve as a physical attestation to Greece's glorious past.⁸² Plutarch also appears to want, at least to some extent, to portray Fabius as virtuous enough to be worthy of emulation. As a result, Plutarch is often defensive in his characterization of the pair since he must combat the negative perceptions and

⁸⁰ Cf. Stadter 1975: 79.

⁸¹ On Plutarch's treatment of his Roman heroes, see Swain 1990: 129: "The picture which emerges from the *Parallel lives* may be introduced by material in the *Moralia*, which shows a similar approach to Romans who are Plutarch's contemporaries. Here Plutarch is not concerned with character, but he does seem to expect a somewhat lower standard for culture from Romans than from Greeks, and to suggest the importance for Romans of acquiring and utilizing Hellenic culture."

⁸² Stadter 1989: xxx. Stadter argues that one of the three main purposes of *Pericles* is to argue against previous negative takes on Pericles' character. Jacobs (2017: 131) notes that Pericles exemplifies "Plutarch's ideal statesman as described in *Political Precepts*."

reputations which have plagued these real and controversial historical figures.⁸³ Both Pericles and Fabius were considered tyrants (by at least a portion of their subjects) in their time, and I suggest that, to a degree, Plutarch capitalizes on this negative perception of them and turns it into a strong defence of their character by stressing their strong opposition to tyranny and their patience with the foolishness of the people (*Per.* 2.4); indeed, this charge of ‘foolishness’ would appear to apply to such accusations of tyranny. By emphasizing their gentleness and caution, and providing insight into the personal thoughts of these heroes, Plutarch is able to depict both Pericles and Fabius as individuals who were vehemently opposed to tyranny. For example, Plutarch tells us that Pericles was reluctant to serve in a public capacity out of concern for the resemblance he bore to the infamous tyrant, Peisistratus (7.1). Plutarch elaborates that: “he was worried, it would seem, about being suspected of trying to be a tyrant” (ἀλλ’, ὡς ἔοικε, δεδιώς μὲν ὑποψία περιπεσεῖν τυραννίδος, 7.3). This accusation of tyranny is repeated several times throughout both *Lives*, accompanied by Plutarch’s repeated defence of the two men against the criticism they received from both their political opponents and the broader public (*Per.* 7.2; 7.3; 16.1; 39.4; *Fab.* 4.1; 9.1).

In all, both Pericles and Fabius appear to meet Plutarch’s standard for political virtue in as far as their final receptions by the public indicate: at the conclusions of *Pericles* and *Fabius Maximus*, Plutarch tells us that, in death, both men were mourned, buried, and remembered ‘like fathers’ to the people. This same metaphor is used at the end of *Timoleon* (39.1): “Cherished in old age and afforded great honour and good will, as though a father of all the people, a small cause compounded with his old age in bringing him to his end” (ἐν τοιαύτῃ δὲ γηροτροφούμενος τιμῇ μετ’ εὐνοίας, ὥσπερ πατὴρ κοινός, ἐκ μικρᾶς προφάσεως τῷ χρόνῳ συνεφασαμένης ἐτελεύτησεν). Likewise, Plutarch states of Aemilius that:

⁸³ See Stadter 1989. This is in many ways similar to Plutarch’s approach to the characterization of Timoleon.

οὐ γὰρ μόνον ἐν οἷς ἐκράτησε καιροῖς ἡπίως πᾶσι καὶ φιλανθρώπως ἀπηλλάγη
χρησάμενος, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ πάντα τὸν λοιπὸν βίον αἰεὶ τι πράττων ἀγαθὸν αὐτοῖς
καὶ κηδόμενος ὥσπερ οἰκείων καὶ συγγενῶν διετέλεσε

For he had he treated them all with mildness and humanity not only at the times of his conquests, but also during all other times, and he was always doing them some good and caring for them as though they were his family. (*Aem.* 39.9)

Just as in the case of *Aemilius Paulus-Timoleon*, Plutarch's use of this metaphor deserves consideration in light of the earlier discussions regarding 1) his distinction between the moral expectations placed on a statesman and those placed on others, and 2) Plutarch's emphasis on the virtuous merits of strong familial bonds, particularly those between brothers and those between fathers and their children. In using this paternal analogy, Plutarch is once again expressing that the virtuous statesman is like a father to the people in his approach to politics; likewise, in treating a statesman as they would a father, the people's actions attest to that statesman's success in attaining this virtue. This is why Plutarch's disapproval of excessive and long-lasting grief is intensified in the case of political figures: because personal tragedy cannot be allowed to interfere with civic duty. For this reason, a politician's grief over the death of an actual child cannot take precedence over their duties to the state.

Ultimately, in Plutarch's pragmatic approach to statesmanship, an effective politician must be to the people as a father is to his child. Fabius' strict adherence to custom, even when dealing with his family, mirrors that very same behaviour in Pericles – who held his son to the same legal standards he would any other. Plutarch himself communicates this very idea quite directly in the final line of Fabius' correspondence with his son in 24.2, wherein Fabius states that a statesman's responsibility is to the people first and to his family second. The key difference between Pericles and Fabius is that Pericles becomes further devoted to serving the people following his personal loss, showcasing an upward moral trajectory. On the other hand, Fabius becomes less effective at serving his people, showcasing a downward moral trajectory. The danger of not adopting this

model of placing political responsibilities over personal ones is a point strongly made throughout *Cato Minor*, wherein Cato is criticized for being unable to compromise his personal values in order to be an effective politician.

CHAPTER 5: *PHOCION-CATO MINOR*

The third and final pair we examine is *Phocion-Cato Minor*. Unlike the two previous case studies, the overarching structure of this pair does not juxtapose grief episodes, as only *Cato Minor* contains such a scene.⁸⁴ The *Cato Minor* grief episode shows that Plutarch's grief episodes may also play an important role within the individual narrative of a singular *Life*, serving to strengthen Plutarch's comparison of a pair similar in character⁸⁵ – not just those with shared experiences. In light of this, the following analysis focuses largely on *Cato Minor*, with a brief discussion of the shared characteristics held by Phocion and Cato and an evaluation of their respective virtues and vices. I argue that the *Cato Minor* grief episode is ultimately used to emphasize the fragility of Cato's virtue, a fragility that results from his adherence to Stoic ideals. Here Plutarch shows that he considers Stoicism an improper form of *paideia*, stressing instead the value of Platonic values and ideals.

As with the *Aem-Tim* and *Per-Fab* pairs, the significance of the *Cato Minor* grief episode is governed by the central themes of the *Phoc-Cato Min* pair. As such, the inclusion, placement, and shape of the episode are all determined by these themes, and their purpose is to reinforce the main thematic message. Unlike the subjects of many of the *Lives*, Cato was never a major politician or the leader of a great military campaign; instead, he was most politically influential in an advisory capacity to other prominent politicians.⁸⁶ Thus, the central theme of the *Phoc-Cato Min* pair is the danger of political inflexibility, and the need for compromise, since this allows for the maintenance

⁸⁴*Phoc-Cato Min* is one of only four pairs that lack a formal *synkrisis*. For further discussion for why this might be, see Pelling 2002: 377.

⁸⁵ Beck 2014b: 468.

⁸⁶ Beck 2014b: 467.

of stable relations with both one's subjects (or fellow citizens) and one's ruler, especially during inhospitable times.⁸⁷

While in the case of the *Per-Fab* pair, the two heroes were paired both because of their shared virtues, their self-control in particular, (πρᾶότης) and also their more general characteristics and experiences, this is not the case for the *Phoc-Cato Min.* pair. Instead, Plutarch introduces the pair by outlining Cato's dedication to preserving the republic, noting that: "with this virtue we compare that of Phocion, though not for their general resemblances, but on the ground that both were good men and devoted to the state" (ἢ παραβάλλομεν τὴν Φωκίωνος, οὐ κατὰ κοινὰς ὁμοιότητας, ὡς ἀγαθῶν καὶ πολιτικῶν ἀνδρῶν, *Phoc.* 3.4). Plutarch stresses his reason for pairing these two figures on the following grounds:

τούτων δὲ τῶν ἀνδρῶν αἱ ἀρεταὶ μέχρι τῶν τελευταίων καὶ ἀτόμων διαφορῶν ἓνα χαρακτῆρα καὶ μορφήν καὶ χρῶμα κοινὸν ἦθους ἐγκεκραμένον ἐκφέρουσιν, ὥσπερ ἴσῳ μέτρῳ μεμιγμένου πρὸς τὸ αὐστηρὸν τοῦ φιλανθρώπου καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἀσφαλὲς τοῦ ἀνδρείου, καὶ τῆς ὑπὲρ ἄλλων μὲν κηδεμονίας, ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν δὲ ἀφοβίας, καὶ πρὸς μὲν τὸ αἰσχρὸν εὐλαβείας, πρὸς δὲ τὸ δίκαιον εὐτονίας συνηρμοσμένης ὁμοίως·

The virtues of these men, even down to their ultimate and minute differences, show that their natures had one and the same stamp, shape, and general hand; they were an equal blend, so to speak, of severity and kindness, of caution and bravery, of consideration for others and fearlessness for themselves, of the careful avoidance of wickedness and, similarly, the eager pursuit of justice. (3.5)

This is an interesting claim on Plutarch's part, as the following assessment of *Phoc-Cato Min* will show this to be ultimately untrue: Phocion ends his life with his virtue intact, whereas Cato does not, a matter which is most evident in the case of the differing consistency of their self-control.

⁸⁷ Jacobs 2017: 102. Themes on effective leadership in specific roles are only mentioned in the prologues to *Thes-Rom*, *Pel-Marc*, *Ag-Cl-Gracchi* and *Phoc-Cato Min*); 104-105. The central theme of the *Phoc-Cato Min* pair is similar to that in the *Ag-Cl-Gracchi*, which is concerned with the dangers of too much flexibility when managing this intermediate position; Jacobs 2017: 369. Jacobs identifies two important lessons in this pair as: "(1) that moral virtue alone is not sufficient for effective statesmanship and (2) that the philosopher is not necessarily the best statesman."

Through his use and placement of the grief episode and other references to Cato's passionate outbursts in *Cato Minor*, Plutarch also subtly shapes the reader's understanding of the flaws of Stoic ethics. In particular, he emphasizes what he considers to be an impractical approach to sustaining emotional virtue in the Stoic ideal of *apatheia*. Thus, the grief episode is a deeply mimetic moment within this life, which exemplifies the need for *metriopatheia* to the reader, since *apatheia* is ultimately shown to be untenable. Throughout this work, Plutarch professes the unsuitability of Stoicism as a guiding philosophical education (*paideia*).⁸⁸ Although the lessons of this work apply to a broad, general audience, Plutarch's warning of the dangers of Stoic ideals such as *apatheia* appears to be directed at his Roman audience more than others. For Plutarch, the combination of inflexible Stoic ethics and the already passionate and warlike culture of the Romans is a recipe for disaster.⁸⁹ Since, in Plutarch's eyes, *apatheia* leads to a lack of emotional regulation, those who are already prone to passionate behaviour are then even more at risk if they are indoctrinated with these Stoic teachings, and thus more doomed to fail in achieving virtue with regard to their emotionality.

I argue that Plutarch uses the episode wherein Cato grieves over the death of his brother, Caepio, to demonstrate that Stoic ethics (chiefly those concerning *apatheia*), are flawed and unsustainable. While thoroughly educated in Stoic philosophy on a theoretical level, Cato is unable to successfully implement his Stoic education during moments when it is most necessary; namely,

⁸⁸ The foundational work on Plutarch and Stoicism is Babut 1969. On Plutarch's relationship with Stoicism, see Opsomer 2014: 88-103. Opsomer notes that, although there has been some speculation regarding Plutarch's philosophical affiliation in the past, the current scholarly consensus is that his allegiance is with Platonism and Opsomer argues that: "He shows himself willing to incorporate foreign ideas and techniques only insofar as they agree with the fundamental ideas and practices of Platonism" (88). This earlier speculation arose from that observation that his work contains certain ideas that are very Stoic in nature. Opsomer summarizes Plutarch's stance on Stoicism as follows: "Plutarch's attitude towards this rival school can indeed be characterized as a mixture of respectful acknowledgment of its merits and condemnation of some of its key tenets" (88).

⁸⁹ This association of a warlike stereotype with his Roman heroes is present, for example, in Plutarch's earlier discussion of the overly-restricted sense of the Latin term *virtus*, which only denotes military virtue, in *Coriolanus* 1.4 (see Asirvatham 2019: 156-157).

during emotionally distressing times, such as the death of his brother and the fall of the Republic (11.2-4; 67-70). Cato himself functions as a literary foil for Stoicism in this *Life* and Plutarch uses Cato's character and his *reactions* to stressful experiences to demonstrate not only the practical flaws of Stoic ethics but also, more specifically, to comment on the incompatibility of such an inflexible philosophical disposition and the duties required of productive statesmen.

The episode wherein Cato grieves over the death of his brother does not only serve as commentary on the state of Cato's ethical virtue; Plutarch also uses this episode to demonstrate that a politician's personal life must be secondary to his political service: his own interests must come second to those of the people. Both Aemilius Paulus and Timoleon are largely successful in this, as is Phocion; Cato, however, is not. As outlined in Chapter 1, even though Plutarch discusses the importance of this brotherly bond in the *Moralia*, within the context of the *Lives* a particularly strong bond might actually be problematic, as might overly strong philosophical inclinations; both of these traits are exemplified in *Cato Minor*.

Phocion

As Pericles does in *Per-Fab*, Phocion comes off as the stronger of the two heroes by the end of this pair. While Pericles in many ways represented the artistic and architectural achievements of Greece's past, Phocion represents its (innate) philosophical achievements.⁹⁰ In much of his behaviour, and seemingly without even requiring the intensive philosophical education that Cato receives, Phocion approaches his political and military responsibilities in an effortlessly Socratic manner. Moreover, much as he does for both Pericles and Fabius, Plutarch portrays Phocion as a man with great self-control. More notably, Phocion even holds the ability to inspire

⁹⁰ For more on Phocion's philosophical disposition and nature, see do Céu Fialho 2010 (esp. 195).

this sort of regulation in others. For example, in Chapter 6, Plutarch describes Phocion's calming influence on Chabrias in great detail:

νέος δὲ ὢν Χαβρία προσέμιξεν ἑαυτὸν τῷ στρατηγῷ καὶ παρείπετο, πολλὰ μὲν εἰς ἐμπειρίαν τῶν πολεμικῶν ὠφελούμενος, ἔστι δὲ ἐν οἷς ἐπανορθούμενος τὴν ἐκείνου φύσιν ἀνώμαλον οὕσαν καὶ ἄκρατον. νωθρὸς γὰρ ὢν ὁ Χαβρίας καὶ δυσκίνητος ἄλλως ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἀγῶσιν ὥργα καὶ διεπυροῦτο τῷ θυμῷ καὶ συνεξέπιπτε τοῖς θραυστάτοις παραβολώτερον, ὥσπερ ἀμέλει καὶ κατέστρεψε τὸν βίον ἐν Χίῳ πρῶτος εἰσελάσας τῇ τριήρει καὶ βιαζόμενος πρὸς τὴν ἀπόβασιν. ἀσφαλῆς οὖν ἅμα καὶ δραστήριος ὁ Φωκίων φαινόμενος τὴν τε μέλλησιν ἀνεθέρμαινε τοῦ Χαβρίου, καὶ πάλιν ἀφήρει τὴν ἄκαιρον ὀξύτητα τῆς ὀρμῆς

When he was a young man, Phocion attached himself to Chabrias, the general, as a close follower, profiting from this relationship greatly in military experience, and sometimes also correcting that general's temperament, which was uneven and violent. For though Chabrias was sluggish and hard to move at other times, in actual battle his spirit was excited and fiery, and he would recklessly rush onto the battlefield with the boldest, just as he actually threw away his life at Chios by being the first to drive his trireme to shore and trying to force a landing. So then Phocion, who showed himself to be safety-minded and energetic, would hasten Chabrias when he delayed, and again would take away the troublesome intensity of his attacks. (6.1-2)

Phocion is equally persistent in his attempts to guide Chabrias' son, Ctesippus as well (see 7.2).⁹¹ Plutarch's characterization of Phocion's incredible self-control is consistent throughout his *Life*, culminating with his stalwart acceptance of his own death. This contrasts strongly with Cato's own consistent lack of self-control;⁹² the severity of this vice is strongly foreshadowed in the grief episodes, and then also culminates with his death. Another indication of Phocion's considerable virtue is Plutarch's appraisal that he never shirked his duty: "He did not seek the office or run for it; nor, on the other hand, did he flee or run away when his city called him" (οὐ παραγγέλλων οὐδὲ μετιών, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ φεύγων οὐδὲ ἀποδιδράσκων τῆς πόλεως καλούσης, 8.1). Plutarch

⁹¹ An important exception to Phocion's positive influence on those around him is in the case of his son, Phocus, who lacks his father's virtue (see *Phoc.* 30).

⁹² Cato's behaviour is here also contrasted with that of Cato Maior, who was said to endure the death of his own son "gently and philosophically" (πρᾶως δὲ καὶ φιλοσόφως, *Cato Mai.* 24.7-8). While Cato Maior has his own character flaws (see, for example, 24.1-2), he fares better than his grandson in remaining composed and prioritizing his public duties above his own grief.

ascribes more value to those who ‘do deeds’ than those who only write about them,⁹³ and in line with this ideal he considers statesmen (political and military leaders) that are dedicated to their civic duty to be the ideal embodiment of this value. Here, Phocion embodies the Plutarchan ideal of a statesman who puts service to the state before all else. In this matter, Phocion and Cato are also contrasted, as Cato is repeatedly shown to value the pursuit of philosophy over all else.

Cato Minor

In *Cato Minor*, grief demonstrates the unsuitability of Stoic *paideia* by corrupting some of Cato’s earlier (more virtuously ambiguous) emotional and behavioural tendencies. *Cato Minor* begins, as most *Lives* do, with an overview of Cato’s genealogy and childhood characteristics (*Cato Min.* 1-3). As elsewhere, Plutarch shapes the perception of Cato’s character here in the prologue, with his discussion of Cato’s childhood temperament and actions. Cato’s stubborn and passionate nature is cast as inflexible and this serves a central theme.⁹⁴

Although Cato is said to have inherited his strong resolve from his uncle Livius Drusus, Plutarch describes Cato’s behaviour in more ambiguous terms, as “a nature that was inflexible, imperturbable, and altogether steadfast”,⁹⁵ noting that, while he was slow to anger, it was difficult to calm him once angered (1.2). Plutarch emphasizes the extreme nature of Cato’s stubbornness with an anecdote in which he describes how a young Cato refused to give any verbal or emotional reaction even when dangled out of a window by a friend of his uncle (2.1-4).⁹⁶ The young Cato remained impassive even under threat of bodily harm, and Plutarch appears to praise Cato’s resolve, since refusing to compromise his values despite external pressure makes his actions

⁹³ Beck 2014a: 5-6. Plutarch himself still meets this standard as he was an active member of his own community.

⁹⁴ Jacobs 2017: 392. Conversely, Caesar is cast as the most flexible. This theme of ‘political flexibility’ appears in all the *Lives* of figures from the Late Republic period: Cato, Cicero, Pompey, and Caesar.

⁹⁵ Plutarch uses the words ἀτρεπτος (“unchangeable, unmoved, inflexible, irreparable”), ἀπαθής (“without passion or feeling, insensible, impassive”), and βέβαιος (“firm, steadfast”).

⁹⁶ Plutarch uses four childhood anecdotes in total, each addressing a different facet of Cato’s character.

laudable. This all-or-nothing approach is precisely what Plutarch is cautioning against within this pair. It is this mindset that leads Cato to commit suicide and, thereby, to abandon his civic duty altogether.

Plutarch stresses the influence of Stoic philosophy on Cato throughout the *Life*:

περὶ πᾶσαν μὲν ἀρετὴν ὥσπερ ἐπιπνοία τινὶ κατάσχετος γεγονώς, διαφόρως δὲ τοῦ καλοῦ τὸ περὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἀτενές, καὶ ἄκαμπτον εἰς ἐπιείκειαν ἢ χάριν, ὑπερηγαπηκῶς

He was possessed with a kind of inspiration for the pursuit of every virtue; but, above all, that form of goodness which is rigid in its sense of justice and that will not bend to mercy or favour, was his great delight. (4.1)

Although Cato is one of the few Romans whom Plutarch called a philosopher, Plutarch does not afford Cato the same praise for philosophical prowess other Roman biographers and historians do.⁹⁷ In fact, as will be shown shortly with our examination of the placement of the grief episode, Plutarch is critical in his assessment of both Cato's adherence to Stoic values and his ability as a Stoic philosopher, questioning whether he is a good one.

Plutarch recounts the story of Caepio's death fairly early on in the narrative, in Chapter 11; while Cato is away serving in the military, Caepio falls ill, and Cato is so desperate to reach him that he nearly drowns but arrives just after Caepio has succumbed (*Cato Min.* 11.1-2). Here Plutarch provides indirect commentary on Cato's reaction, reporting that,

ἐμπαθέστερον ἔδοξεν ἢ φιλοσοφώτερον ἐνεγκεῖν τὴν συμφορὰν, οὐ μόνον κλαυθμοῖς καὶ περιπτύξεσι τοῦ νεκροῦ καὶ βαρύτητι λύπης, ἀλλὰ καὶ δαπάνη περὶ τὴν ταφήν καὶ πραγματεῖαις θυμιαμάτων καὶ ἱματίων πολυτελῶν συγκατακαέντων καὶ μνήματος ξεστοῦ λίθων Θασίων ἀπὸ ταλάντων ὀκτῶ κατασκευασθέντος ἐν τῇ Αἰνίων ἀγορᾷ.

In facing this misfortune, Cato seemed more passionate than philosophical, considering not only his weeping, his embracings of the dead, and the heaviness of his grief, but also in the amount of money he spent on the burial, and the efforts that he took to have incense and expensive clothing burned with the body, and a monument of polished Thasian marble

⁹⁷ Beck 2019: 314.

costing eight talents which he had constructed in the market-place of Aenus. (*Cato Min.* 11.2)⁹⁸

Plutarch follows this story by noting that, although some considered Cato's emotional reaction out of character, his soft-heartedness was actually well-attested for those who had observed him carefully (11.3). With this sentiment, Plutarch reinforces the validity of his portrayal of an emotional Cato. This depiction contrasts sharply with his commentary on the grief episode in *Pericles*, where he asserts that Pericles' strong grief *was* out of character (36.4).

The most condemning observation of all is that Cato was that "seemed more passionate than philosophical". Cato's most defining virtue is his strict adherence to his Stoic values, and yet, in one of his greater moments of need with the death of his brother, he fails to abide by these values, or rather, these values fail to serve him. Once again, Plutarch has made a point regarding the impracticality of Stoic *apatheia*. This assessment is further supported by the passage which precedes the grief episode. In this passage, Plutarch briefly outlines Cato's efforts to meet and secure the friendship of the Stoic philosopher, Athenodorus Cordylion – who had famously resisted befriending any politicians until this point (10.1-2). In essence, Plutarch chooses to follow Cato's great philosophical achievement with a philosophical failure in his overly passionate reaction at the death of his brother. As demonstrated in the two previous case studies, Plutarch is exceedingly fond of using juxtaposition to make a point; in this instance, I argue that the juxtaposition of these two moments adds further emphasis to the unstoic behaviour exhibited during the grief episode.

⁹⁸ Plutarch uses the words ἐμπαθής ("passionate, much affected by/at something"), συμφοράζω ("bewail, experiencing misfortune"), κλαυθμός ("weeping"), and λύπη ("pain of mind, grief, distress"). While Plutarch is nowhere explicit about his thoughts on how the establishment or dedication of monuments to lost loved ones connects to virtue, this passage does suggest that Plutarch is (once again) most concerned with avoiding excess in all matters. Cato's spending here is characterized as excessive and emotionally driven rather than measured and responsible, and the context of this passage suggests that this was not the correct, virtuous approach to take.

On the other hand, the grief episode is followed by Plutarch's assessment that Cato left his military service well-loved by the soldiers who served with him (12.1). Although this seems to be a complimentary but unrelated piece of commentary, here the effect of Plutarch's positioning of the grief episode between these two more positive accounts of Cato's actions and Stoic behaviour is notable: it further emphasizes the idea that Cato is flawed but well-meaning, achieving great things on account of his virtue despite his personal and political shortcomings. Thus, it must be concluded that Plutarch's criticism is generally more directed at Stoicism than at Cato himself, who is merely used to demonstrate the flaws of Stoicism (i.e., the unsustainability of a practice such as *apatheia*). There would appear to be further, related narrative significance for this grief episode, as it seems to foreshadow Cato's emotional, and ultimately self-destructive, reaction to the fall of the republic at the end of the narrative. Others have named Cato's Stoicism as a factor in his death, since choosing to live under Caesar's tyrannical rule would impede his freedom to act morally.⁹⁹

Cato's intensity of character goes beyond just his behaviour and opinions, it permeates his emotions as well, despite his adherence to Stoic ideals (such as *apatheia*). This emotional intensity is well attested in Cato's relationship with his brother, Caepio. Plutarch's last anecdote on Cato's childhood conveys this intense devotion to Caepio:

ἔτι μὲν οὖν παιδάριον ὢν μικρόν, ἀπεκρίνατο τοῖς ἐρωτῶσι τίνα φιλεῖ μάλιστα, τὸν ἀδελφόν· τίνα δεύτερον, ὁμοίως τὸν ἀδελφόν, καὶ τρίτον, ἄχρι οὗ πολλάκις λέγοντος ἀπεῖπεν ὁ ἐρωτῶν. γενόμενος δ' ἐν ἡλικίᾳ μᾶλλον ἐβεβαίον τὴν πρὸς τὸν ἀδελφὸν εὐνοίαν. ἔτη γὰρ εἴκοσι γεγονώς χωρὶς Καιπίωνος οὐκ ἐδείπνησεν, οὐκ ἀπεδήμησεν, εἰς ἀγορὰν οὐ προῆλθε.

When he was still a little boy, and was asked whom he loved most, he answered, "My brother"; and to the question whom he loved next, he also answered, "My brother"; and he answered the same way a third time, until, after many such answers from him, his questioner gave up. And when he became an adult, he maintained this affection for his

⁹⁹ Zadorojnyi 2007: 216.

brother even more firmly. Indeed, when he was twenty years old, he would note at dinner, or make a journey, or go out into the forum without Caepio. (*Cato Min.* 3.5)

While Plutarch has neatly outlined the virtues of brotherly love elsewhere (see Chapter 1 for discussion of *De fraterno amore*), Cato's devotion to his brother is not wholly ideal within the context of his role as a statesman. While his over-attachment to his Stoic values has already been addressed, the grief episode highlights another such attachment: in short, Cato's relationship with his brother is characterized by his immoderate devotion to Caepio. Upon learning of his brother's failing health, Cato rushes to his side, almost perishing in the process because he is so desperate to reach Caepio that he decides to risk travelling in a small trading-vessel during a serious storm (11.1-2). Plutarch begins this passage by mentioning that "Cato was still in military service" at the time, which indicates that Cato abandoned his military responsibilities as a result of his devotion to his brother, just as he will later abandon his political responsibilities due to his devotion to Stoic values.¹⁰⁰

Here we arrive at an important question: are all matters that fall under the umbrella of *paideia* equal in the eyes of Plutarch? Since education in philosophy was a form of *paideia*, does Plutarch's advocacy for *paideia* include advocacy for Stoicism, or does it only endorse Middle Platonic ideals?¹⁰¹ Cato is receptive towards (and educated in) Greek philosophy; he should be considered a virtuous man insofar as Plutarch is concerned. However, Plutarch's characterization of Cato presents him as virtuous and flawed, with good intentions but often either too passionate

¹⁰⁰ It is necessary to note that Plutarch does not condemn Cato for his devotion to his brother during this episode, as he even goes on to provide a brief defense of Cato against his critics: "For some people cavilled at these things as inconsistent with Cato's usual freedom from ostentation, not observing how much tenderness and affection was mingled with the man's inflexibility and firmness against pleasures, fears, and shameless entreaties" (11.3). Plutarch also condemns Caesar's defamation of Cato at the end of 11.4 on the same grounds. Although the reception of Cato's actions is positive in this case, this commentary nevertheless also clearly emphasizes that Cato's seemingly uncharacteristic emotional behaviour is actually consistent throughout the course of the *Life*.

¹⁰¹ Beck (2019: 311) points out that (despite its name) Middle Platonism contains a mixture of Academic, Peripatetic, and Stoic influences.

or too dispassionate in his actions and reactions. Plutarch's choice of anecdotes, and the nature of his supporting commentary, suggests that he is trying to give the impression that Cato held great potential, but ultimately failed to apply himself correctly. Plutarch's Cato exhibits such behaviour in both a personal setting and the political arena, failing to attain both political and personal virtue. I agree with Beck: "Plutarch's depiction of the Younger Cato in the *Life* and his use of the Socratic paradigm to set off key aspects of his behaviour runs counter to the Roman model of the Stoic sage and undermines it."¹⁰² Plutarch is critical of both Stoicism and the Stoic claim on Socrates,¹⁰³ and he uses Cato to express both these criticisms. Are then all forms of *paideia* equal? Plutarch's depiction of Cato rejects this idea. This is not to say that Plutarch rejects Stoicism in its entirety, but rather any ideals that contradict those of Middle Platonism, just as the Stoic *apatheia* contradicts the Platonic *metriopatheia*.¹⁰⁴

In the previous case studies, Pericles, Fabius, and Aemilius all embodied the Plutarchan value of placing personal, familial matters second to the needs of the state. However, here Cato is already displaying behaviour that is counter to this value. This anecdote appears, therefore, to be strategically placed, setting up the overwhelming intensity of their brotherly relationship prior to the episode of grief. In this manner, Plutarch poetically displays how Cato's intense and consuming love for his brother eventually results in an equally intense and consuming grief following his death. Despite the virtuousness of brotherly love, Plutarch's characterization of this relationship is a criticism of Cato, who loves his brother to excess, rather than in moderation. In this, Cato does not embody the virtue of *πρότης*, following in the flawed footsteps of figures like Fabius and Cato Maior.

¹⁰² Beck 2019: 316-317.

¹⁰³ Beck 2019: 317.

¹⁰⁴ See footnote 88 for sources discussing Plutarch's views on Stoicism.

CHAPTER 6: PLUTARCH'S *PAIDEIA* AND OTHER CONCLUSIONS

Why does the virtuous execution of grief matter when discussing Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*? This question brings us back to the motivations which drove Plutarch to write this work in the first place. Throughout the *Lives*, Plutarch advocates for the significance of Greek *paideia* to his audience, and his Roman readers in particular. More than that, he specifically advocates for the Roman adoption of Platonic values or Platonic *paideia*. As a proud Greek living under Roman rule, Plutarch was called to defend the merits of his culture to the Roman elite that governed him.¹⁰⁵ Plutarch then is aware of a need to defend the relevance and quality of Greek culture to his Roman audience. The *Lives* are one way in which Plutarch is able to do this, and in his use of this paralleled structure, he depicts the noble Greeks and Romans of the past as being on comparable footing. Philip A. Stadter has previously argued that: "in the comparative epilogues which conclude most of the pairs, Plutarch is careful to distribute praise and blame equitably, so that neither nation can claim superior virtue".¹⁰⁶

While I agree that Plutarch does attempt to stress an even sense of virtue in these epilogues, I claim here, as I have attempted to show throughout this paper, that a difference in the virtues of his Greek and Roman heroes is visible within the body of each *Life*. It is not that Plutarch is suggesting that most Romans are ultimately less virtuous than their Greek counterparts, but rather that they have not been afforded the same necessary education, *paideia*, in order to successfully develop those virtues. This is demonstrated by how he depicts the heroes of the *Lives*, and his

¹⁰⁵ See Stadter 2014. It is important to remember that Plutarch was a Greek-born Roman citizen, raised in Chaeronea, the site of several battles for Greek independence from Roman rule (13). As Stadter notes, "at times Roman domination could be oppressive...Roman rule for Plutarch was a given, but the stability of its government and the benevolence of its rulers was never assured."

¹⁰⁶ Stadter 2014: 21.

juxtaposition of how the Greek and Roman heroes within each of the pairs deal with personal grief. In Plutarch's view, the Roman understanding of virtue is flawed and needs correction – correction which is possible through the Roman adoption of Platonic *paideia*.

It is Plutarch's contention that the Romans require re-education because they have been seduced by Stoic values. Although, as a Middle Platonist, Plutarch's own philosophical views are influenced by Stoicism, he is also consistent in contesting Stoic values.¹⁰⁷ It would be overzealous to claim that he rejects all Stoic tenets, but my analysis of the grief episodes in the aforementioned case studies shows Plutarch's clear rejection of certain Stoic tenets, such as *apatheia*. Thus, we arrive at the significance of the grief episodes within these *Lives*; they are a vital tool by which Plutarch delivers moral commentary and models the importance of this specific, Platonic form of Greek *paideia* for his Roman audience. Through these episodes, he demonstrates that the application of Middle Platonic values such as *metriopatheia* is key to becoming a successful and virtuous statesman, regardless of one's cultural background. I will provide a final brief assessment of each of the three pairs for the purpose of examining Plutarch's use of the grief episodes as a defence of Platonic *paideia* and condemnation of Stoic *paideia*. In particular, I will examine how these grief episodes work closely with the death episodes of each hero so as to emphasize Plutarch's views on *paideia*.

Death, and *Paideia* in the *Phoc-Cato Min* Pair

While I have focused on the function of the grief episodes (*Aem.* 36.1; *Tim.* 5.2; *Per.* 36.4; *Fab.* 24.4; *Cato Min.* 11.1-2) in relative isolation for a fair portion of the thesis, it is clear that these episodes are only one of several shaping moments within a *Life*. In *Cato Minor*, for example, there is a functional connection between the grief and suicide episodes, which together form a

¹⁰⁷ Beck 2019: 316.

compounded criticism of the Stoic tenets on *apatheia*. This is further elucidated by Plutarch's contrasting depiction of the deaths of both Cato and Phocion. In their juxtaposed deaths, both individuals are compared to Socrates at the end of their respective *Lives*,¹⁰⁸ but the favourability of this comparison is decidedly greater for Phocion than it is for Cato.¹⁰⁹ Beginning first with Phocion and then Cato, the following overview of Plutarch's rendering of these two events within their respective narratives will show that Phocion is unquestionably more successfully 'Socratic' (and, therefore, more successful and morally praiseworthy) than Cato. It is my contention that through this juxtaposition Plutarch implies not only that Stoic tenets are flawed, but also that Greek *paideia* is most natural to the Greeks themselves. This is not to suggest that Plutarch is reneging on his intentions to impart the importance of the Roman adoption of Greek *paideia*; rather, this message is inspired by Plutarch's desire to defend and exhort Greek excellence to its Roman conquerors. As we shall see with the final overview of *Aem-Tim*, there is hope yet for the Roman integration of Platonic *paideia*.

At this point, a brief summary of the Socratic parallels within this pair is necessary. *Phocion* comes to a close with the execution episode after Phocion, his close friends and other political opponents of Hagnonides the orator are sentenced to death as traitors to Athens (*Phoc.* 33-36). Where Cato is agitated and emotionally distraught throughout the day leading up to his suicide, by contrast (as is especially evident in *Cato Min.* 67.1-2), Phocion is cool, calm, and collected throughout the entirety of the execution episode (*Phoc.* 36.1-4). Plutarch's description of Phocion here especially emphasizes his steady composure and makes clear that he retains his dignity throughout it all (36.1) While those around him are angry and distraught, Phocion achieves

¹⁰⁸ Zadorojnyi 2007: 217.

¹⁰⁹ Beck 2019: 315-16. Beck notes that, with Plutarch's use of a Socratic paradigm in *Cato Minor*, "we are also likely witnessing the calling into question of the Roman *synkrisis* of Cato with Socrates."

true Socratic imitation both in his composure and in other parallels – including his wrongful execution by the Athenians and his death by hemlock.¹¹⁰ As if Plutarch fears he has not made this parallel evident enough, in the final line of the *Life* he writes that: “Phocion’s fate reminded the Greeks of Socrates’ fate” (ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν περὶ Φωκίωνα πραχθέντα τῶν περὶ Σωκράτην πάλιν ἀνέμνησε τοὺς Ἕλληνας, 38.2).

Cato Minor ends with the climatic suicide episode. It should be noted that Plutarch’s account of Cato’s suicide is the main and most elaborate source we have,¹¹¹ suggesting (as in the case of Timoleon’s grief episode) that Plutarch is here elaborating and exaggerating the scene, and that he is doing so for a greater purpose. It is clear that Stoicism plays a key role in motivating Cato to commit suicide, as indicated by Cato’s forceful defence of the Stoic tenet that living a good life is only possible if you are free (67.1-4). This captures the incompatibility of Stoic doctrine and political duty, as, in Plutarch’s assessment, the latter requires compromise.

Although Cato tries to imitate Socrates at several points, he falls short in his attempts at achieving this in several ways. Cato’s actual suicide fails to achieve the intended solemn serenity which was demonstrated by Socrates before his own death, and the practical execution thereof goes horribly awry: “the account of Cato’s suicide in Plutarch contains a whole list of symptoms unsuitable for a philosophical environment, such as deception, suspicion, distraction, angry shouting, noise, and physical violence.”¹¹² Damning details such as Cato’s assault of the slave, behaviour that was antithetical to that expected of a philosopher, appear only in Plutarch’s account, which suggests that Plutarch originated and included this information precisely for the purpose of

¹¹⁰ Zadorojnyi 2007: 220. In using the sword, rather than poison, to commit suicide, Cato’s death is distinct from Socrates’, who he is trying to emulate; conversely, Phocion dies a very Socratic death. Cato’s death by sword is more violent, gruesome, and erratic than a death by poison would be, which adds to the sense that he is out of control and lacking the appropriate and desired philosophical sense of composure.

¹¹¹ Zadorojnyi 2007: 217.

¹¹² Zadorojnyi 2007: 218.

emphasizing Cato's philosophical shortcomings in the final, climactic moments of the *Life*.¹¹³ In short, Plutarch's Cato is depicted as being erratic, irrational, possessing a rather violent temper, and generally showing unstable emotional behaviour beyond just his depiction in the grief episode.¹¹⁴

The question of why Cato's death is so philosophically problematic has been previously tackled by Michael Trapp, who considered the possibility that Plutarch did so because he was skeptical of the Romans' ability to attain *paideia* properly.¹¹⁵ Trapp concluded that it was instead more likely that Plutarch was opposed to the Roman propensity for framing Cato as equal to Socrates in his philosophical pedigree.¹¹⁶ I would argue that Plutarch is doing both: he did consider the Romans capable of attaining *paideia* properly (hence the writing of the *Lives* to begin with), but did not consider them to have actually achieved this as of yet, which led him to criticize Cato – the great Roman philosopher – in the manner outlined above in an attempt to make his Roman audience aware of the need for further revision of their values.

In summary, it can be seen that Phocion is characterized as being on par with Socrates through this comparison, but that Cato falls short here. Despite the fact that both Phocion and Cato are hampered in their duties as a result of their inflexible moral values, Phocion is depicted as being a superior statesman to Cato. While Phocion ultimately dies because of his values, when the

¹¹³ Zadorojnyi 2007: 218-219. Additionally, in the midst of his agonizing last moments, Cato knocks over an abacus, which, in consideration of its function, Zadorojnyi has suggested is symbolic of an attack against logic and reason itself; Plutarch, *De cohibenda ira* 459b-462b.

¹¹⁴ In addition to the grief episode, Plutarch foreshadows this 'breakdown' and aggression with his characterization of Cato at several points throughout the story; for example, Plutarch describes Cato's anger at Scipio's interference in his engagement to his first fiancée, Lepida, as excessive and immature (7.2). Cato's speech against Silanus and Caesar in 23.1 is similarly characterized as "passionate and angry" – Plutarch uses ὀργή ('anger, wrath') and πάθος ('passion, emotion'). Although these incidents are fairly spaced out within the narrative and interspersed between lengthy eulogies on the many virtues of Cato, this reoccurring theme of behaviour is thus indicative of Plutarch's intention to subtly construct a consistently non-apathetic Cato.

¹¹⁵ Trapp 1999: 496-497; Zadorojnyi 2007: 222.

¹¹⁶ Beck 2019: 313.

morally corrupt Athenians turn against him, Cato dies for himself, for his own values. In essence, Cato abandons his people, whereas Phocion is abandoned by his people. Plutarch's depiction of Cato's behaviour during both the grief and suicide episodes also portrays him as prone to all-consuming personal attachments.

Death and *Paideia* in the *Per-Fab* Pair

Just as in the case of the *Phoc-Cato Min* pair, Pericles, the Greek hero, stands out as the more virtuous of the two men at the conclusion of their respective lives. Moreover, just as the Greek hero in the previous pair was ultimately more virtuous than his counterpart, thanks to his Platonic education, so too is Pericles more virtuous than Fabius as a result of his own education.¹¹⁷ Throughout his youth, Pericles receives the appropriate philosophical instruction, and, therefore, his behaviour is guided by the practical and effective principles of Platonic *paideia*, allowing him to foster and maintain a virtuous approach to both his personal life and public service (*Per.* 4-6). Conversely, Fabius receives no such instruction and therefore spirals into less virtuous behaviour at the end of his own *Life*. In Plutarch's quest to defend Greek *paideia* – and Greek culture and achievements more generally – to his Roman audience, Pericles is an ideal choice of hero. Pericles is also an incredibly important figure in establishing the lasting (but later diminished) reputation of Greek excellence, through his construction of many great Greek monuments.¹¹⁸

It is noteworthy that the ending of *Pericles* includes a Socratic paradigm (as do *Timoleon*, *Phocion*, and *Cato Minor*), which once again speaks to the strong Platonic influence on Plutarch's philosophy and, subsequently, the kind of *paideia* he advertises to his (Roman) audience. In the

¹¹⁷ For discussion on Plutarch's criticism of Roman *paideia* in relation to virtue, and insight on why he depicts Fabius Maximus' grief as a potentially bad thing, see Asirvatham 2019: 156-157. Plutarch equates the Latin *virtus* and the Greek ἀνδρεία (itself understood to refer to a specific kind of masculine, military virtue); see also McDonnell 2002: 235-236; 248.

¹¹⁸ Plutarch's admiration for Pericles is also evident elsewhere; for instance, Pericles is referenced almost forty times throughout the course of the *Moralia* in relation to his leadership (see Jacobs 2017: 128).

final lines of *Pericles*, Plutarch draws a parallel between Pericles and Socrates with his assessment that the people of Athens were heavily critical of Pericles while he was alive, only realizing that they had been unjustly harsh in their treatment and opinion of him after his death (31.4-5). In this way, Plutarch suggests that Pericles suffered a similar fate as did Socrates in his last days, who was also treated harshly by the Athenians, and whose reputation was also only repaired *post mortem*. In being like Socrates, who represents the height of moral virtue for Plutarch,¹¹⁹ Pericles represents the merits of Platonic *paideia* for the reader. Thus, despite his emotional response during the grief episode, Pericles' virtue remains intact and is strengthened in his final days as he endures his own, slow (and likely painful) death with equanimity (38.3-4). Indeed, his last words show his relentless dedication to the people and his public duty. Speaking in response to his friends' rumination on his greatest accomplishments, he informs them that his proudest achievement was that: "no living Athenian ever wore the black funeral garb because of me" (δι' ἐμὲ τῶν ὄντων Ἀθηναίων μέλαν ἱμάτιον περιβάλετο, 38.4).

Fabius' death is less philosophically textured than that of Pericles', and ultimately rather bittersweet. Despite his important role in bringing about the Roman victory against Carthage, Fabius dies before the war is officially concluded (27.1). In the chapter preceding his final moments, Plutarch outlines the degradation of Fabius' virtue as his caution turned into fearmongering and unnecessarily terrorized the people of Rome (26.5). Without the guidance of Platonic *paideia*, Fabius is unable to withstand the pressures of his military service and ultimately succumbs to negative emotions, such as fear. Having come so close to a truly virtuous end, Fabius's story is both enticing and rather frustrating, but its parting message is clear: Fabius, no

¹¹⁹ Beck 2019: 312.

matter how good a man, was ultimately ill-equipped for the tasks put before him. Strength of character alone is not enough, and virtue must be cultivated through education.

Death and *Paideia* in the *Aem-Tim* Pair

Plutarch's treatment of the last pair, *Aemilius Paulus-Timoleon*, is perhaps the most encouraging to his Roman readers in terms of their hopes for attaining Platonic *paideia*. Unlike the Roman heroes in *Per-Fab* and *Phoc-Cato Min*, Aemilius ends his *Life* on a positive note, having had a successful career and been consistent in his virtues. Plutarch's placement of the Roman *Life* before the Greek *Life*, in this case, has important implications for our understanding of Plutarch's overall consideration of Aemilius' status compared to that of Timoleon. This appears to be a rare instance wherein the Roman hero's virtue is either equal to or surpasses that of the Greek hero. If Aemilius received no more philosophical education than either Fabius or Cato, how was he able to succeed where they failed? As we have just established, innate goodness is not enough to sustain ethical virtue in the eyes of Plutarch.

I propose that Plutarch has a subtle but important justification for just this problem. At the beginning of his *Life*, Plutarch mentions that Aemilius was descended from the Greek philosopher, Pythagoras (2.2). He continues by noting that: "most of this family who rose to distinction by their cultivation of virtue, were blessed with good fortune" (οἱ μὲν οὖν πλεῖστοι τῶν εἰς δόξαν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας ταύτης προελθόντων δι' ἀρετήν, ἣν ἐζήλωσαν, εὐτύχησαν, 2.3). In tracing Aemilius' lineage back to not just any Greek, but a prominent Greek philosopher, Plutarch draws an innate connection between his subject and Greek *paideia*, which is absent for the other two Roman subjects. In short, the implication here may be that the important cultural teachings necessary for the improvement and maintenance of one's virtue were passed down through the

generations in this family.¹²⁰ So, in Aemilius, Plutarch crafts a hero of dual identities, one capable of successfully marrying the military prowess of the Romans with the philosophical enlightenment of the Greeks. In facing both great personal grief and continuing to serve the people, despite being ill in the final days leading up to his death, Aemilius is consistent in placing the needs of the people ahead of his own (*Aem.* 39).¹²¹ Likewise, at the time of his death, Timoleon is said to have been “cherished in old age and afforded great honour and good will, as though a father of all the people” (ἐν τοιαύτῃ δὲ γηροτροφούμενος τιμῇ μετ’ εὐνοίας, ὥσπερ πατήρ κοινός, *Tim.* 39.1), and, as such, can be seen to have successfully fulfilled his public duty in the manner which Plutarch deems most virtuous. Although he did not handle his grief in an ideal manner, his reaction still served as evidence that he loved his brother dearly and that he committed what would otherwise be a great atrocity for the good of the state – thereby fulfilling the chief purpose of Plutarch’s virtuous statesman.

Grief episodes in Plutarch’s *Lives* show the strength of a hero’s virtue. In these emotionally charged scenes, the virtues of these heroes are put to the test: those that have self-control and are able to regulate their emotions through the strength of their reason, rather than be overcome by their emotions, are able to fulfill their political duties appropriately. Conversely, those that are overcome by their emotions fail to meet Plutarch’s standards for political virtue in not placing the needs of the state above their own. Plutarch ultimately shows the need for Platonic *paideia*, as this correct form of education strengthens an individual’s reason, which, in turn, allows them to regulate their emotions and cultivate virtues such as self-control. In this way, the adoption of Platonic *paideia* makes for a more virtuous and, ultimately, more effective statesman.

¹²⁰ See Cairns 2014: 23.

¹²¹ Aemilius dies after returning to Rome to perform religious duties.

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